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That we must work by crime to punish crime,
And slay, as if death had but this one gate?'
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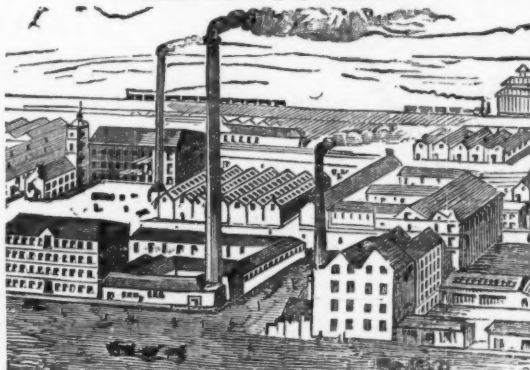
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APRIL 1888.

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APRIL 1888.

Eve.

BY THE AUTHOR OF 'JOHN HERRING,' 'MEHALAH,' &C.

CHAPTER XXXII.

WANDERING LIGHTS.

NO sooner was Mr. Jordan left alone than his face became ghastly, and his eyes were fixed with terror, as though he saw before him some object of infinite horror. He put his quivering thin hands on the elbows of his arm-chair and let himself slide to his knees, then he raised his hollow eyes to heaven, and clasped his hands and wrung them; his lips moved, but no vocal prayers issued from them. He lifted his hands above his head, uttered a cry, and fell forward on his face upon the oak floor. Near his hand was his stick with which he rapped against the wall or on the floor when he needed assistance. He laid hold of this, and tried to raise himself, but faintness came over him, and he fell again and lost all consciousness.

When he recovered sufficiently to see what and who were about him, he found that he had been lifted on to his bed by Jasper and Barbara, and that Jane was in the room. His motion with his hands, his strain to raise himself, had disturbed the bandages and reopened his wound, which was again bleeding, and indeed had soaked through his clothes and stained the floor.

He said nothing, but his eyes watched and followed Jasper with a mixture of hatred and fear in them.

'He irritates me,' he whispered to his daughter; 'send him out. I cannot endure to see him.'

Then Barbara made an excuse for dismissing Jasper.

When he was gone, Mr. Jordan's anxiety instead of being allayed was increased. He touched his daughter, and drew her ear to him, and whispered, 'Where is he now? What is he doing?'

'I do not know, papa. He is probably in his room.'

'Go and see.'

'Papa dear, I cannot do that. Do you want him?'

'Do I want him? No, Barbara, but I do not choose that he shall escape. Go and look if there is a light in his window.'

She was about to send Jane, when her father impatiently insisted on her going herself. Wondering at his caprice she obeyed.

No sooner was the door closed behind her than the old man signed Jane Welsh to come near him.

'Jane,' he said in a whisper, 'I want you to do something for me. No one must know about it. You have a sweetheart, I've heard, the policeman, Joseph Woodman, at Tavistock.'

The girl pulled at the ends of her apron, and, looking down, said, 'Lawk! How folks do talk!'

'Is it true, Jane?'

'Well, sir, I won't deny us have been keeping company, and on Sunday went to a love-feast together.'

'That is well,' said Mr. Jordan earnestly, with his wild eyes gleaming. 'Quick, before my daughter comes. Stand nearer. No one must hear. Would you do Joseph a good turn and get him a sergeantry?'

'Oh please, sir!'

'Then run as fast as you can to Tavistock.'

'Please, sir, I durstn't. It be night and it's whisht¹ over the moor.'

'Then leave it, and I will send some one else, and you will lose your lover.'

'What do you want me to do, sir? I wouldn't have that neither.'

'Then run to Tavistock, and tell Joseph Woodman to communicate at once with the warders of the Prince's Town jail, and bid him bring sufficient men with him, and come here, and I will

¹ Whisht = uncanny.

deliver into their hands a runaway convict, a man who broke out of jail not long ago.'

'Please, sir, where is he? Lawk, sir! What if he were on the moor as I went over it?'

'Never mind where he is. I will produce him at the right moment. Above all—Jane—remember this, not a word of what I have said to Mr. Jasper or to Miss Barbara. Go secretly, and go at once. Hush! Here she comes.'

Barbara entered. 'A light is in his window,' she said. Then her father laughed, and shut his hands.

'So,' he muttered, 'so I shall snap him.'

When her father was composed, and seemed inclined to sleep, Barbara left his room, and went out of the house. She needed to be by herself. Her bosom heaved. She had so much to think of, so many troubles had come upon her, the future was dark, the present uncertain.

If she were in the house she would not be able to enjoy that quiet for which she craved, in which to compose the tumult of her heart and arrange her ideas. There she was sure to be disturbed: a maid would ask for a duster, or another bunch of candles; the cook would send to announce that the chimney of the kitchen was out of order, the soot or mortar was falling down it; the laundry maid would ask for soap; Eve would want to be amused. Every other minute she would have some distracting though trifling matter forced on her. She must be alone. Her heart yearned for it. She would not go to the Rock, the association with it was painful. It was otherwise with the moor, Morwell Down, open to every air, without a tree behind which an imp might lurk and hoot and make mows.

Accordingly, without saying a word to any one, Barbara stole along the lane to the moor.

That was a sweet summer night. The moon was not yet risen, the stars were in the sky, not many, for the heaven was not dark, but suffused with lost sunlight. To the east lay the range of Dartmoor mountains, rugged and grey; to the west, peaked and black against silver, the Cornish tors. But all these heights on this night were scintillating with golden moving spots of fire. The time had come for what is locally called 'swaling,' that is, firing the whinbrakes. In places half a hillside was flaked with red flame, then it flared yellow, then died away. Clouds of smoke, tinged with fire reflection from below, rolled away before the wind. When the conflagration reached a dense and tall tree-like mass of gorse, the flame

rose in a column or wavered like a golden tongue. Then, when the material was exhausted and no contiguous brake continued the fire, the conflagration ended, and left only a batch of dull glowing scarlet embers.

Barbara leaned against the last stone hedge which divided moor from field, and looked at the moving lights without thinking of the beauty and wildness of the spectacle. She was steeped in her own thoughts, and was never at any time keenly alive to the beautiful and the fantastic.

She thought of Jasper. She had lost all faith in him. He was false and deceitful. What could she believe about that meeting on the Raven Rock? He might have convinced her father that he was not there. He could not convince her. What was to be done? Would her father betray the man? He was ill now and could do nothing. Why was Jasper so obstinate as to refuse to leave? Why? Because he was infatuated with Eve.

On that very dawn it was that Jasper had been thrown and nearly killed. If only he had been killed outright! Why had she nursed him so carefully? Far better to have left him on the moor to die. How dare he aspire to Eve? The touch of his hand carried a taint. Her brain was dark, yet, like that landscape, full of wandering sparks of fire. She could not think clearly. She could not feel composedly. Those moving, wavering fires, now rushing up in sheaves of flame, now falling into a sullen glow, burnt on the sides of solid mountains, but her fiery thoughts, that sent a blaze into her cheek and eye, and then died into a slow heat, moved over tossing billows of emotion. She put her hand to her head as if by grasping it she could bring her thoughts to a standstill; she pressed her hands against her bosom, as if by so doing she could fix her emotions. The stars in the serene sky burned steadily ever of one brightness. Below, these wandering fires flared, glowed, and went out. Was it not a picture of the contrast between life on earth and life in the settled celestial habitations? Barbara was not a girl with much fancy, but some such thought came into her mind, and might have taken form had not she at the moment seen a dark figure issue from the lane.

'Who goes there?' she called imperiously.

The figure stopped, and after a moment answered: 'Oh, Miss! you have a-given me a turn. It be me—Jane.'

'And pray,' said Barbara, 'what brings you here at night? Whither are you going?'

The girl hesitated, and groped in her mind for an excuse. Then she said: 'I want, miss, to go to Tavistock.'

'To Tavistock! It is too late. Go home to bed.'

'I must go, Miss Barbara. I'm sure I don't want to. I'm scared of my life, but the master has sent me, and what can I do? He've a-told me to go to Joseph Woodman.'

'It is impossible, at this time. It must not be.'

'But, Miss, I promised I'd go, and sure enough I don't half like it, over these downs at night, and nobody knows what one may meet. I wouldn't be caught by the Whish Hounds and Black Coppelstone, not for'—the girl's imagination was limited, so she concluded, 'well, Miss, not for nothing.'

Barbara considered a moment, and then said: 'I have no fear. I will accompany you over the Down, till you come to habitations. I am not afraid of returning alone.'

'Thank you, Miss Barbara, you be wonderfully good.'

The girl was, indeed, very grateful for her company. She had had her nerves sorely shaken by the encounter with Watt, and now in the fulness of her thankfulness she confided to her mistress all that Mr. Jordan had said, concluding with her opinion that probably 'It was naught but a fancy of the squire; he do have fancies at times. Howmsoever, us must humour 'm.'

Jasper also had gone forth. In his breast also was trouble, and a sharp pain, that had come with a spasm when Barbara told him how she hated him.

But Jasper did not go to Morwell Down. He went towards the Raven Rock that lay on the farther side of the house. He also desired to be alone and under the calm sky. He was stifled by the air of a house, depressed by the ceiling.

The words of Barbara had wounded him rather than stung him. She had not only told him that she hated him, but had given the best proof of her sincerity by betraying him. Suspecting him of carrying on an unworthy intrigue with Eve, she had sacrificed him to save her sister. He could not blame her; her first duty was towards Eve. One comfort he had that, though Barbara had betrayed him, she did not seek his punishment, she sought only his banishment from Morwell.

Once—just once—he had half opened her heart, looked in, and fancied he had discovered a tender regard for him lurking in its bottom. Since then Barbara had sought every opportunity of disabusing his mind of such an idea. And now, this night, she had poured out her heart at his feet, and shown him hatred, not love.

Jasper's life had been one of self-denial. There had been little joy in it. Anxieties had beset him from early childhood; solicitude for his brother, care not to offend his father. By nature he had a very loving heart, but he had grown up with none to love save his brother, who had cruelly abused his love. A joyous manhood never ensues on a joyless boyhood. Jasper was always sensible of an inner sadness, even when he was happy. His brightest joys were painted on a sombre background, but then, how much brighter they seemed by the contrast—alas, only, that they were so few! The circumstances of his rearing had driven him in upon himself, so that he lived an inner life, which he shared with no one, and which was unperceived by all. Now, as he stood on the rock, with an ache at his heart, Jasper uncovered his head, and looked into the softly lighted vault, set with a few faint stars. As he stood thus with his hands folded over his hat, and looked westward at the clear, cold, silvery sky behind and over the Cornish moors, an unutterable yearning strained his heart. He said no word, he thought no thought. He simply stood uncovered under the summer night sky, and from his heart his pain exhaled.

Did he surmise that at that same time Barbara was standing on the moor, also looking away beyond the horizon, also suffering, yearning, without knowing for what she longed? No, he had no thought of that.

And as both thus stood far removed in body, but one in sincerity, suffering, fidelity, there shot athwart the vault of heaven a brilliant dazzling star.

Mr. Coyshe at his window, smoking, said: 'By Ginger! a meteor!'

But was it not an angel bearing the dazzling chalice of the sangreal from highest heaven, from the region of the still stars, down to this world of flickering, fading, wandering fires, to minister therewith balm to two distressed spirits?

CHAPTER XXXIII.

THE OWLS.

BARBARA had been interrupted in her meditations, so was Jasper. As he stood lost in a painful dream, but with a dew from heaven falling on his parched soul, suddenly he was startled out of his abstraction by a laugh and an exclamation at his elbow.

'Well, Jasper, composing verses to the weak-eyed Leah or the blue-orbed Rachel?'

'What brings you here, Watt?' asked Jasper, disguising his annoyance.

'Or, my sanctimonious fox, are you waiting here for one of the silly geese to run to you?'

'You have come here bent on mischief,' said Jasper, disdainingly to notice his jokes.

The evening, the still scene, the solitary platform raised so high above the land beyond, had seemed holy, soothing as a church, and now, at once, with the sound of Walter's voice, the feeling was gone, all seemed desecrated.

'Watt,' said Jasper sternly, 'you sent me away to Buckfastleigh by a lie. Why did you do that? It is utterly false that my father is ill and dying.'

'Is it so? Then I dreamed it, Jasper. Morning dreams come true, folks say. There, my brother, you are a good forgiving fellow. You will pardon me. The fact is that Martin and I wanted to know how matters went at home. I did not care to go myself, Martin could not go, so—I sent you, my good simpleton.'

'You told me a lie.'

'If I had told you the truth you would not have gone. What was that we were taught at school? "*Magna est veritas, et prævalebit.*" I don't believe it; experience tells me the contrary. Long live lies; they win the day all the world over.'

'What brings you here?'

'Have I not told you? I desired to see you and to have news of my father. You have been quick about it, Jasper. I could scarce believe my eyes when I saw you riding home.'

'You have been watching?'

'Of course I have. My eyes are keen. Nothing escapes them.'

'Walter, this will not do. I am not deceived; you did not come here for the purpose you say. You want something else; what is it?'

The boy laughed, snapped his fingers, and began to dance, whistling a tune, on the rock; approaching, then backing from Jasper.

'Oh, you clever old Jasper!' he laughed, 'now you begin to see—like the puppy pitched into the water-butt, who opened his eyes when too late.'

Jasper folded his arms. He said nothing, but waited till the

boy's mad pranks came to an end. At last Watt, seeing that he could not provoke his brother, desisted, and came to him with affected humility.

'There, Jasper—Saint Jasper, I mean—I will be quiet and go through my catechism.'

'Then tell me why you are here.'

'Well, now, you shall hear our scheme. Martin and I thought that you had better patch up your little quarrel with father, and then we knew we should have a good friend at his ear to prompt forgiveness, and so, perhaps, as his conscience stirred, his purse-strings might relax, and you would be able to send us a trifle in money. Is not this reasonable?'

Yes, there could be no denying it, this was reasonable and consistent with the characters of the two, who would value their father's favour only by what it would profit them. Nevertheless Jasper was unsatisfied. Watt was so false, so unscrupulous, that his word never could be trusted.

Jasper considered for a few minutes, then he asked, 'Where is Martin—is he here?'

'Here!' jeered the boy, 'Martin here, indeed! Not he. He is in safe quarters. Where he is I will blab to no one, not even to you. He sends me out from his ark of refuge as the dove, or rather as the raven, to bring him news of the world from which he is secluded.'

'Walter, answer me this. Who met Miss Eve this evening on this very rock? Answer me truly. More depends on this than you are aware of.'

'Miss Eve! What do you mean? My sister who is dead and gone? I do not relish the company of ghosts.'

'You know whom I mean. This is miserable evasion. I mean the younger of the daughters of Mr. Jordan. She was here at sundown this evening, and some one was with her. I conjure you by all that you hold sacred——'

'I hold nothing sacred,' said the boy.

'I conjure you most solemnly to tell me the whole truth, as brother to brother.'

'Well, then—as brother to brother—I did.'

'For what purpose, Watt?'

'My dear Jasper, can we live on air? Here am I hopping about the woods, roosting in the branches, and there is poor Martin mewed up in his ark. I must find food for him and myself. You know that I have made the acquaintance of the young lady who, oddly

enough, bears the name of our dear departed mother and sister. I have appealed to her compassion, and held out my hat for money. I offered to dance on my head, to turn a wheel all round the edge of this cliff, in jeopardy of my life, for half a guinea, and she gave me the money to prevent me from risking broken bones.'

'Oh, Watt, you should not have done this!'

'We must live. We must have money.'

'But, Watt, where is all that which was taken from my pocket?'

'Gone,' answered the boy. 'Gone as the snow before a south-west wind. Nothing melts like money, not even snow, no, nor butter, no, nor a girl's heart.' Then with a sly laugh, 'Jasper, where does old addle-brains keep his strong box?'

'Walter!' exclaimed Jasper, indignantly.

'Ah!' laughed the boy, 'if I knew where it was I would creep to it by a mouse hole, and put my little finger into the lock, and when I turned that, open flies the box.'

'Walter forbear. You are a wicked boy.'

'I confess it, I glory in it. Father always said I was predestined to——'

'Be silent,' ordered Jasper, angrily; 'you are insufferable.'

'There, do not ruffle your feathers over a joke. Have you some money to give me now?'

'Watt,' said Jasper, very sternly, 'answer me frankly, if you can. I warn you.' He laid his hand on the boy's arm. 'A great deal depends on your giving me a truthful answer. Is Martin anywhere hereabouts? I fear he is, in spite of your assurances, for where you are he is not often far away. The jackal and the lion hunt together.'

'He is not here. Good-bye, old brother Grave-airs.' Then he ran away, but before he had gone far turned and hooted like an owl, and ran on, and was lost in the gloom of the woods, but still as he ran hooted at intervals, and owls answered his cry from the rocks, and flitted ghost-like about in the dusk, seeking their brother who called them and mocked at them.

Now that he was again alone, Jasper in vain sought to rally his thoughts and recover his former frame of mind. But that was not possible. Accordingly he turned homewards.

He was very tired. He had had two long days' ride, and had slept little, if at all, the previous night. Though recovered, after his accident he was not perfectly vigorous, and the two hard days and broken rest had greatly tired him. On reaching Morwell he did

not take a light, but cast himself, in his clothes, on his bed, and fell into a heavy sleep.

Barbara walked quietly back after having parted with Jane. She hoped that Jasper had on second thoughts taken the prudent course of escaping. It was inconceivable that he should remain and allow himself to be retaken. She was puzzled how to explain his conduct. Then all at once she remembered that she had left the convict suit in her father's room; she had forgotten to remove it. She quickened her pace and arrived breathless at Morwell.

She entered her father's apartment on tiptoe. She stood still and listened. A night-light burned on the floor, and the enclosing iron pierced with round holes cast circles of light about the walls. The candle was a rushlight of feeble illuminating power.

Barbara could see her father lying apparently asleep, in bed, with his pale thin hands out, hanging down, clasped, as in prayer; one of the spots of light danced over the finger-tips and nails. She heard him breathe, as in sleep.

Then she stepped across the room to where she had cast the suit of clothes. They lay in a grey heap, with the spots of light avoiding them, dancing above them, but not falling on them. Barbara stooped to pick them up.

'Stay, Barbara,' said her father. 'I hear you. I see what you are doing. I know your purpose. Leave those things where they lie.'

'Oh, papa! dear papa, suffer me to put them away.'

'Let them lie there, where I can see them.'

'But, papa, what will the maids think when they come in? Besides, it is untidy to let them litter about the floor.'

He made an impatient gesture with his hand.

'May I not, at least, fold them and lay them on the chair?'

'You may not touch them at all,' he said in a tone of irritation. She knew his temper too well to oppose him further.

'Good night, dear papa. I suppose Eve is gone to bed.'

'Yes; go also.'

She was obliged, most reluctantly, to leave the room. She ascended the stairs, and entered her own sleeping apartment. From this a door communicated with that of her sister. She opened this door and with her light entered and crossed it.

Eve had gone to bed, and thrown all her clothes about on the floor. Barbara had some difficulty in picking her way among the scattered articles. When she came to the bedside, she stood, and held her candle aloft, and let the light fall over the sleeping girl.

How lovely she was, with her golden hair in confusion on the pillow! She was lying with her cheek on one rosy palm, and the other hand was out of bed, on the white sheet—and see! upon the finger, Barbara recognised the turquoise ring. Eve did not venture to wear this by day. At night, in her room, she had thrust the golden hoop over her finger, and had gone to sleep without removing it.

Barbara stooped, and kissed her sister's cheek. Eve did not awake, but smiled in slumber; a dimple formed at the corner of her mouth.

Then Barbara went to her own room, opened her desk and the secret drawer, and looked at the bunch of dry roses. They were very yellow now, utterly withered and worthless. The girl took them, stooped her face to them—was it to discover if any scent lingered in the faded leaves? Then she closed the drawer and desk again, with a sigh.

Was Barbara insensible to what is beautiful, inappreciative of the poetry of life? Surely not. She had been forced by circumstances to be practical, to devote her whole thought to the duties of the house and estate; she had said to herself that she had no leisure to think of those things that make life graceful; but through her strong, direct, and genuine nature ran a *Leitmotif* of sweet pure melody, kept under and obscured by the jar and jangle of domestic cares and worries, but never lost. There is no nature, however vulgar, that is deficient in its musical phrase, not always quite original and unique, and only the careless listener marks it not. The patient, attentive ear suspects its presence first, listens for it, recognises it, and at last appreciates it.

In poor faithful Barbara now the sweet melody, somewhat sad, was rising, becoming articulate, asserting itself above all other sounds and adventitious strains—but, alas! there was no ear to listen to it.

Barbara went to her window and opened it.

'How the owls are hooting to-night!' she said. 'They, like myself, are full of unrest. To-whit! To-whoo!'

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE DOVES.

BARBARA had no thought of going to bed. She could not have slept had she gone. There was a clock in the tower, a noisy clock that made its pulsations heard through the quadrangle, and this clock struck twelve. By this time Jane had roused the young policeman, and he was collecting men to assist him in the capture. Perhaps they were already on their way,—or were they waiting for the arrival of warders from Prince's Town? Those warders were more dangerous men than the constables, for they were armed with short guns, and prepared to fire should their game attempt to break away.

She looked across the court at Jasper's window. No light was in it. Was he there, asleep? or had he taken her advice and gone? She could not endure the thought of his capture, the self-reproach of having betrayed him was more than she could bear. Barbara, usually so collected and cool, was now nervous and hot.

More light was in the sky than had been when she was on the down. The moon was rising over the roof. She could not see it, but she saw the reflection in Jasper's window, like flakes of silver.

What should she do? Her distress became insupportable, and she felt she must be doing something to relieve her mind. The only thing open to her was to make another attempt to recover the prison suit. If she could destroy that, it would be putting out of the way one piece of evidence against him—a poor piece, still a piece. She was not sure that it would avail him anything, but it was worth risking her father's anger on the chance.

She descended the stairs once more to her father's room. The door was ajar, with a feeble yellow streak issuing from it. She looked in cautiously. Then with the tread of a thief she entered and passed through a maze of quivering bezants of dull lights. She stooped, but, as she touched the garments, heard her father's voice, and started upright. He was speaking in his sleep—'*De profundis clamavi ad te*;' then he tossed and moaned, and put up his hand and held it shaking in the air. '*Si iniquitates*'—he seemed troubled in his sleep, unable to catch the sequence of words, and repeated, '*Si iniquitates observaveris*,' and lay still on his pillow again; whilst Barbara stood watching him, with her finger to her lip, afraid to move, afraid of the consequences should he wake and see her in her disobedience.

Then he mumbled, and she heard him pulling at his sheet. 'Out of love, out of the deeps of love, I have sinned.' Then suddenly he cried out, '*Si iniquitates observaveris, Domine, quis sustinebit?*'—he had the sentence complete, or nearly so, and it appeased him. Barbara heard him sigh, she stole to his side, bowed over his ear, and said, '*Apud te propitiatio est—speravit anima mea in Domino.*' Whether he heard or not she did not know; he breathed thenceforth evenly in sleep, and the expression of distress left his face.

Then Barbara took up the bundle of clothes and softly withdrew. She was risking something for Jasper—the loss of her father's regard. She had recently drawn nearer to his heart than ever before, and he had allowed her to cling round his neck and kiss him. Yet now she deliberately disobeyed him! He would be very angry next morning.

When she was in the hall she turned over in her mind what was best to be done with the clothes. She could not hide them in the house. Her father would insist on their reproduction. They must be destroyed. She could not burn them, the fire in the kitchen was out. The only way she could think of getting rid of them was to carry them to the Raven Rock and throw them over the precipice. This, accordingly, she did. She left the house, and in the moonlight walked through the fields and wood to the crag and hurled the bundle over the edge.

Now that this piece of evidence against Jasper was removed, it was expedient that he should escape without further delay—if he were still at Morwell.

Barbara had a little money of her own. When she unlocked her desk and looked at the withered flowers, she drew from it her purse that contained her savings. There were several pounds in it. She drew the knitted silk purse from her pocket, and, standing in the moonlight, counted the sovereigns in her hand. She was standing before the gatehouse near the old trees, hidden by their shadow. She looked up at Jasper's other window—that which commanded the entrance and was turned from the moon. Was he there? How could she communicate with him, give him the money, and send him off? Then the grating clock in the tower tolled one. Time was passing, danger drew on apace. Something must be done. Barbara picked up some pebbles and threw them at Jasper's window, but her aim was bad or her arm shook, and they scattered without touching the glass.

All at once she heard feet—a trampling in the lane—and she

saw also that lights were burning on the down. The lights were merely gorse blazes, for Morwell Moor was being 'swaled,' and the flames were creeping on; and the trampling was of young colts and bullocks that fed on the down, which were escaping before the fires; but to Barbara's nervous fear the lights and the tramp betokened the approach of a body of men to capture Jasper Babb. Then, without any other thought than to save him, she ran up the stair, struck at his door, threw it open, and entered. He started from his bed, on which he had cast himself fully dressed, and from dead weariness had dropped asleep.

'For God's dear sake,' said Barbara, 'come away! They are after you; they are close to the house. Here is the money—take it, and go by the garden.'

She stood in the door, holding it, trembling in all her limbs, and the door she held rattled.

He came straight towards her.

'Miss Jordan!' he exclaimed. 'Oh, Miss Jordan! I shall never forgive myself. Go down into the garden—I will follow at once. I will speak to you; I will tell you all.'

'I do not wish you to speak. I insist on your going.'

He came to her, took her hand from the door, and led her down the stairs. As they came out into the gateway they heard the tramp of many feet, and a rush of young cattle debouched from the lane upon the open space before the gate.

Barbara was not one to cry, but she shivered and shrank before her eyes told her what a mistake she had made.

'Here,' she said, 'I give you my purse. Go!'

'No,' answered Jasper. 'There is no occasion for me to go. I have acted wrongly, but I did it for the best. You see, there is no occasion to fear. These ponies have been frightened by the flames, and have come through the moor-gate, which has been left open. I must see that they do not enter the court and do mischief.'

'Never mind about the cattle, I pray you. Go! Take this money; it is mine. I freely give it you. Go!'

'Why are you so anxious about me if you hate me?' asked Jasper. 'Surely it would gratify hate to see me handcuffed and carried off.'

'No, I do not hate you—that is, not so much as to desire that. I have but one desire concerning you—that we should never see your face again.'

'Miss Jordan, I shall not be taken.'

She flared up with rage, disappointment, shame. 'How dare

you!' she cried. 'How dare you stand here and set me at naught, when I have done so much for you—when I have even ventured to rouse you in the depth of night! My God! you are enough to madden me. I will not have the shame come on this house of having you taken here. Yes—I recall my words—I do hate you.'

She wrung her hands; Jasper caught them and held them between his own.

'Miss Barbara, I have deceived you. Be calm.'

'I know only too well that you have deceived me—all of us,' she said passionately. 'Let go my hands.'

'You misunderstand me. I shall not be taken, for I am not pursued. I never took your sister's money. I have never been in jail.'

She plucked her hands away.

'I do not comprehend.'

'Nevertheless, what I say is simple. You have supposed me to be a thief and an escaped convict. I am neither.'

Barbara shook her head impatiently.

'I have allowed you to think it for reasons of my own. But now you must be undeceived.'

The young cattle were galloping about in front, kicking, snorting, trying the hedges. Jasper left Barbara for a while that he might drive them into a field where they could do no harm. She remained under the great gate in the shadow, bewildered, hoping that what he now said was true, yet not daring to believe his words.

Presently he returned to her. He had purposely left her that she might have time to compose herself. When he returned she was calm and stern.

'You cannot blind me with your falsehoods,' she said. 'I know that Mr. Ezekiel Babb was robbed by his own son. I know the prison suit was yours. You confessed it when I showed it you on your return to consciousness: perhaps before you were aware how seriously you committed yourself. I know that you were in jail at Prince's Town, and that you escaped.'

'Well, Miss Jordan, what you say is partly true, and partly incorrect.'

'Are you not Mr. Babb's son?' she asked imperiously.

He bowed; he was courtly in manner.

'Was not his son found guilty of robbing him?'

He bowed again.

'Was he not imprisoned for so doing?'

'He was so.'

'Did he not escape from prison?'

'He did.'

'And yet,' exclaimed Barbara angrily, 'you dare to say with one breath that you are innocent, whilst with the next you confess your guilt! Like the satyr in the fable, I would drive you from my presence, you blower of true and false!'

He caught her hands again and held her firmly, whilst he drew her out of the shadow of the archway into the moonlight of the court.

'Do you give it up?' he asked; and, by the moon, the sickle moon, on his pale face, she saw him smile. By that same moon he saw the frown on her brow. 'Miss Barbara, I am not Ezekiel Babb's *only* son!'

Her heart stood still; then the blood rushed through her veins like the tidal bore in the Severn. The whole of the sky seemed full of daylight. She saw all now clearly. Her pride, her anger fell from her as the chains fell from Peter when the angel touched him.

'No, Miss Jordan, I am guiltless in this matter—guiltless in everything except in having deceived you.'

'God forgive you!' she said in a low tone as her eyes fell and tears rushed to them. She did not draw her hands from his. She was too much dazed to know that he held them. 'God forgive you!—you have made me suffer very much!'

She did not see how his large earnest eyes were fixed upon her, how he was struggling with his own heart to refrain from speaking out what he felt; but had she met his eye then in the moonlight, there would have been no need of words, only a quiver of the lips, and they would have been clasped in each other's arms.

She did not look up; she was studying, through a vale of tears, some white stones that caught the moonlight.

'This is not the time for me to tell you the whole sad tale,' he went on. 'I have acted as I thought my duty pointed out—my duty to a brother.'

'Yes,' said Barbara, 'you have a brother—that strange boy.'

A laugh, jeering and shrill, close in their ears. From behind the great yew appeared the shoulders and face of the impish Walter.

'Oh, the pious, the proper Jasper! Oh, ho, ho! What frail men these saints are who read their Bibles to weak-eyed Leahs and blooming Rachels, and make love to both!'

He pointed jeeringly at them with his long fingers.

‘I set the down on fire for a little fun. I drove the ponies along this lane; and see, I have disturbed a pair of ringdoves as well. I won’t hoot any more; but coo! coo! coo!’ He ran away, but stopped every now and then and sent back to them his insulting imitations of the call of wood-pigeons—‘Coo! coo! coo!’

CHAPTER XXXV.

THE ALARM BELL.

NEXT morning Barbara entered the hall after having seen about the duties of the house, ordered dinner, weighed out spices and groats, made the under-servant do the work of Jane, who was absent; she moved about her usual duties with her usual precision and order, but without her usual composure.

When she came into the hall on her way to her father’s room, she found Eve there engaged and hard at work on some engrossing occupation.

‘Oh, Bab! do come and see how bright and beautiful I am making this,’ said the girl in overflowing spirits and pride. ‘I found it in the chest in the garret, and I am furbishing it up.’ She held out a sort of necklace or oriental carcanet, composed of chains of gold beads and bezants. ‘It was so dull when I found it, and now it shines like pure gold!’ Her innocent, childish face was illumined with delight. ‘I am become really industrious.’

‘Yes, dear; hard at work doing nothing.’

‘I should like to wear this,’ she sighed.

That she had deceived her sister, that she had given her occasion to be anxious about her, had quite passed from her mind, occupied only with glittering toys.

Barbara hesitated at her father’s door. She knew that a painful scene awaited her. He was certain to be angry and reproach her for having disobeyed him. But her heart was relieved. She believed in the innocence of Jasper. Strengthened by this faith, she was bold to confront her father.

She tapped at the door and entered.

She saw at once that he had heard her voice without, and was expecting her. There was anger in his strange eyes, and a hectic colour in his hollow cheeks. He was partly dressed, and sat on

the side of the bed. In his hand he held the stick with which he was wont to rap when he needed assistance.

‘Where are the clothes that lay on the floor last night?’ was his salutation, pointing with the stick to the spot whence Barbara had gathered them up.

‘They are gone, papa; I have taken them away.’

She looked him firmly in the face with her honest eyes, unwincing. He, however, was unable to meet her steadfast gaze. His eyes flickered and fell. His mouth was drawn and set with a hard, cruel expression, such as his face rarely wore; a look which sometimes formed, but was as quickly effaced by a wave of weakness. Now, however, the expression was fixed.

‘I forbade you to touch them. Did you hear me?’

‘Yes, dear papa, I have disobeyed you, and I am sorry to have offended you; but I cannot say that I repent having taken the clothes away. I found them, and I had a right to remove them.’

‘Bring them here immediately.’

‘I cannot do so. I have destroyed them.’

‘You have dared to do that!’ His eyes began to kindle and the colour left his cheeks, which became white as chalk. Barbara saw that he had lost command over himself. His feeble reason was overwhelmed by passion.

‘Papa,’ she said, in her calmest tones, ‘I have never disobeyed you before. Only on this one occasion my conscience——’

‘Conscience!’ he cried. ‘I have a conscience in a thorn bush, and yours is asleep in feathers. You have dared to creep in here like a thief in the night and steal from me what I ordered you to leave.’

He was playing with his stick, clutching it in the middle and turning it. With his other hand he clutched and twisted and almost tore the sheets. Barbara believed that he would strike her, but when he said ‘Come here,’ she approached him, looking him full in the face without shrinking.

She knew that he was not responsible for what he did, yet she did not hesitate about obeying his command to approach. She had disobeyed him in the night in a matter concerning another, to save that other; she would not disobey now to save herself.

His face was ugly with unreasoning fury, and his eyes wilder than she had seen them before. He held up the stick.

‘Papa,’ she said, ‘not your right arm, or you will reopen the wound.’

Her calmness impressed him. He changed the stick into his

left hand, and, gathering up the sheet into a knot, thrust it into his mouth and bit into it.

Was the moment come that Barbara had long dreaded? And was she to be the one on whom his madness first displayed itself?

'Papa,' she said, 'I will take any punishment you think fit; but, pray, do not strike me, I cannot bear that—not for my own sake, but for yours.'

He paid no attention to her remonstrance, but raised the stick, holding it by the ferrule.

Steadily looking into his sparkling eyes, Barbara repeated the words he had muttered and cried in his sleep, '*De profundis clamavi ad te, Domine. Si iniquitates observaveris, quis sustinebit?*'

Then, as in a dissolving view on a sheet one scene changes into another, so in his wild eyes the expression of rage shifted to one of fear; he dropped the stick, and Jasper, who at that moment entered, took it and laid it beyond his reach.

Mr. Jordan fell back on his pillow and moaned, and put his hands over his brow, and beat his temples with his palms. He would not look at his daughter again, but peevishly turned his face away.

Now Barbara's strength deserted her; she felt as if the floor under her feet were rolling and as if the walls of the room were contracting upon her.

'I must have air,' she said. Jasper caught her arm and led her through the hall into the garden.

Eve, alarmed to see her sister so colourless, ran to support her on the other side, and overwhelmed her with inconsiderate attentions.

'You must allow her time to recover herself,' said Jasper. 'Miss Jordan has been up a good part of the night. The horses on the down were driven on the premises by the fire and alarmed her and made her rise. She will be well directly.'

'I am already recovered,' said Barbara, with affected cheerfulness. 'The room was close. I should like to be left a little bit in the sun and air, by myself, and to myself.'

Eve readily ran back to her burnishing of the gold beads and bezants, and Jasper heard Mr. Jordan calling him, so he went to his room. He found the sick gentleman with clouded brow and closed lips, and eyes that gave him furtive glances but could not look at him steadily.

'Jasper Babb,' said Mr. Jordan, 'I do not wish you to leave

the house or its immediate precincts to-day. Jane has not returned, Eve is unreliable, and Barbara overstrained.'

'Yes, sir, I will do as you wish.'

'On no account leave. Send Miss Jordan to me when she is better.'

When, about half an hour after, Barbara entered the room, she went direct to her father to kiss him, but he repelled her.

'What did you mean,' he asked, without looking at her, 'by those words of the Psalm?'

'Oh, papa, I thought to soothe you. You are fond of the *De Profundis*—you murmur it in your sleep.'

'You used the words significantly. What are the deeds I have done amiss for which you reproach me?'

'We all need pardon—some for one thing, some for another. And, dearest papa, we all need to say "*Apud te propitiatio est—speravit anima mea in Domino.*"'

'*Propitiatio!*' repeated Mr. Jordan, and resumed his customary trick of brushing his forehead with his hand as though to sweep cobwebs from it which fell over and clouded his eyes. 'For what? Say out plainly of what you accuse me. I am prepared for the worst. I cannot endure these covert stabs. You are always watching me. You are ever casting innuendoes. You cut and pierce me worse than the scythe. That gashed my body, but you drive your sharp words into my soul.'

'My dear papa, you are mistaken.'

'I am not mistaken. Your looks and words have meaning. Speak out.'

'I accuse you of nothing, darling papa, but of being perhaps just a little unjust to me.'

She soon saw that her presence was irritating him, her protestations unavailing to disabuse his mind of the prejudice that had taken hold of it, and so, with a sigh, she left him.

Jane Welsh did not return all day. This was strange. She had promised Barbara to return the first thing in the morning. She was to sleep in Tavistock, where she had a sister, married.

Barbara went about her work, but with abstracted mind, and without her usual energy.

She was not quite satisfied. She tried to believe in Jasper's innocence, and yet doubts would rise in her mind in spite of her efforts to keep them under.

Whom had Eve met on the Raven Rock? Jasper had denied that he was the person: who, then, could it have been? The only other conceivable person was Mr. Coyshe, and Barbara at once dis-

missed that idea. Eve would never make a mystery of meeting Doctor Squash, as she called him.

At last, as evening drew on, Jane arrived. Barbara met her at the door and remonstrated with her.

'Please, Miss, I could not help myself. I found Joseph Woodman last night, and he said he must send for the warders to identify the prisoner. Then, Miss, he said I was to wait till he had got the warders and some constables, and when they was ready to come on I might come too, but not before. I slept at my sister's last night.'

'Where are the men now?'

'They are about the house—some behind hedges, some in the wood, some on the down.'

Barbara shuddered.

'Please, Miss, they have guns. And, Miss, I were to come on and tell the master that all was ready, and if he would let them know where the man was they'd trap him.'

'There is no man here but Mr. Babb.'

Jane's face fell.

'Lawk, Miss! If Joseph thought us had been making games of he, I believe he'd never marry me—and after going to a love-feast with him, too! 'Twould be serious that, surely.'

'Joseph has taken a long time coming.'

'Joseph takes things leisurely, Miss—'tis his nature. Us have been courting time out o' mind; and, please, Miss, if the man were here, then the master was to give the signal by pulling the alarm-bell. Then the police and warders would close in on the house and take him.

Barbara was as pale now as when nearly fainting in the morning. This was not the old Barbara with hale cheeks, hearty eyes, and ripe lips, tall and firm, and decided in all her movements. No! This was not at all the old Barbara.

'Well, Miss Jordan, what is troubling you?' asked Jasper. 'The house is surrounded. Men are stationed about it. No one can leave it without being challenged.'

'Yes,' said Barbara quickly. 'By the Abbot's Well there runs a path down between laurels, then over a stile into the wood. It is still possible—will you go?'

'You do not trust me?'

'I wish to—but——'

'Will you do one thing more for me?'

She looked timidly at him.

'Peal the alarm-bell.'

CHAPTER XXXVI.

CONFESSIONS.

As the bell clanged Mr. Jordan came out of his door. He had been ordered to remain quiet and take no exercise; but now, leaning on his stick and holding the door-jamb, he came forth.

'What is this?' he asked, and Jasper put his hand to the rope to arrest the upward cast. 'Why are you ringing, Barbara? Who told you to do so?'

'I bade her ring,' said Jasper, 'to call these'—he pointed to the door.

Several constables were visible; foremost came Joseph and a prison warder.

'Take him!' cried Mr. Jordan; 'arrest the fellow. Here he is—he is unarmed.'

'What! Mr. Jasper!' asked Joseph. Among the servants and labourers the young steward was only known as 'Mr. Jasper.' 'Why, sir, this is—this is—Mr. Jasper!'

'This is the man,' said Ignatius Jordan, clinging to the door-jamb and pointing excitedly with his stick,—'this is the man who robbed his own father of money that was mine. This is the man who was locked up in jail and broke out, and, by the mercy and justice of Heaven, was cast at my door.'

'I beg your pardon, sir,' said Joseph, 'I don't understand. This is your steward, Mr. Jasper.'

'Take him, handcuff him before my eyes. This is the fellow you have been in search of, I deliver him up.'

'But, sir,' said the warder, 'you are wrong. This is not our escaped convict.'

'He is; I tell you I know he is.'

'I am sorry to differ from you, sir, but this is not he. I know which is which. Why, this chap's hair have never been cut. If he'd been with us he'd have a head like a mole's back.'

'Not he!' cried Mr. Jordan, frantically. 'I say to you this *is* Jasper Babb.'

'Well, sir,' said the warder, 'sorry to differ, sir, but our man ain't Jasper at all—he's Martin.'

Then Joseph turned his light blue eyes round in quest of Jane. 'I'll roast her! I'll eat her,' he muttered, 'at the next love-feast.'

The men went away much disappointed, grumbling, swearing, ill-appeased by a glass of cider each; Jane sulked in the kitchen, and said to Barbara, 'This day month, please, Miss.'

Mr. Jordan, confounded, disappointed, crept back to his room and cast himself on his bed.

The only person in the house who could have helped them out of their disappointment was Eve, who knew something of the story of Martin, and knew, moreover, or strongly suspected, that he was not very far off. But no one thought of consulting Eve.

When all the party of constables was gone, Barbara stood in the garden, and Jasper came to her.

'You will tell me all now?' she said, looking at him with eyes full of thankfulness and trust.

'Yes, Miss Jordan, everything. It is due to you. May I sit here by you on the garden seat?'

She seated herself, with a smile, and made room for him, drawing her skirts to her.

The ten-week stocks, purple and white, in a bed under the window filled the air with perfume; but a sweeter perfume than ten-week stocks, to Barbara, charged the atmosphere—the perfume of perfect confidence. Was Barbara plain? Who could think that must have no love for beauty of expression. She had none of her sister's loveliness, but then Eve had none of hers. Each had a charm of her own—Eve the charm of exquisite physical perfection, Barbara that of intelligence and sweet faith and complete self-devotion streaming out of eye and mouth—indeed, out of every feature. Which is lovelier—the lantern, or the light within? There was little of soul and character in frivolous Eve.

When Jasper seated himself beside Miss Jordan, neither spoke for full ten minutes. She folded her hands on her lap. Perhaps their souls were, like the ten-week stocks, exhaling sweetness.

'Dear Miss Jordan,' said Jasper, 'how pleasantly the thrushes are singing!'

'Yes,' she replied, 'but I want to hear your story—I can always listen to the thrushes.'

He was silent after this for several minutes. She did not further press him. She knew he would tell her all when he had rallied his courage to do so. They heard Eve upstairs in her room lightly singing a favourite air from 'Don Giovanni.'

'It is due to you,' said Jasper at last. 'I will hide nothing from you, and I know your kind heart will bear with me if I am somewhat long.'

She looked round, smiled, just raised her fingers on her lap and let them fall again.

When Jasper saw that smile he thought he had never seen a sweeter sight. And yet people said that Barbara was plain!

'Miss Jordan, as you have heard, my brother Martin took the money. Poor Martin! Poor dear Martin! His is a broken life, and it was so full of promise!'

'Did you love Martin very dearly?'

'I *do* love him dearly. I have pitied him so deeply. He has had a hard childhood. I will tell you all, and your good kind soul will pity, not condemn him. You have no conception what a bright handsome lad he was. I love to think of him as he was—guileless, brimming with spirits. Unfortunately for us, our father had the idea that he could mould his children's character into whatever shape he desired, and he had resolved to make of Martin a Baptist minister, so he began to write on his tender heart the hard tenets of Calvinism with an iron pen dipped in gall. When my brother and I played together we were happy—happy as butterflies in the sun. When we heard our father's voice or saw him, we ran away and hid behind bushes. He interfered with our pursuits, he sneered at our musical tastes, he tried to stop our practising on the violin. We were overburdened with religion, had texts rammed into us as they ram groats down the throats of Strasburg geese. Our livers became diseased like these same geese—our moral livers. Poor Martin could least endure this education: it drove him desperate. He did what was wrong through sheer provocation. By nature he is good. He has a high spirit, and that led him into revolt.'

'I have seen your brother Martin,' said Barbara. 'When you were brought insensible to this house he was with you.'

'What did you think of him?' asked Jasper, with pride in his tone.

'I did not see his face; he never removed his hat.'

'Has he not a pleasant voice? and he is so grand and generous in his demeanour!'

Barbara said nothing. Jasper waited, expecting some word of praise.

'Tell me candidly what you thought of him,' said Jasper.

'I do not like to do so. I did form an opinion of him, but—it was not favourable.'

'You saw him for too short a time to be able to judge,' said the young man. 'It never does to condemn a man off-hand without knowing his circumstances. Do you know, Miss Jordan, that

saying of St. Paul about premature judgments? He bids us not judge men, for the Great Day will reveal the secrets of all hearts, and then—what is his conclusion? “All men will be covered with confusion and be condemned of men and angels”? Not so—“Then shall every man have praise of the Lord.” Their motives will show better than their deeds.’

‘How sweetly the thrushes are singing!’ said Barbara now; then—‘So also Eve may be misunderstood.’

‘Oh, Miss Jordan, when I consider what Martin might have become in better hands with more gentle and sympathetic treatment, it makes my heart bleed. I assure you my boyhood was spent in battling with the fatal influences that surrounded him. At last matters came to a head. Our father wanted to send Martin away to be trained for a preacher, and Martin took the journey-money provided him, and joined a company of players. He had a good voice, and had been fairly taught to sing. Whether he had any dramatic talent I can hardly say. After an absence of a twelvemonth or more he returned. He was out of his place, and professed penitence. I dare say he really was sorry. He remained a while at home, but could not get on with our father, who was determined to have his way with Martin, and Martin was equally resolved not to become a Dissenting minister. To me it was amazing that my father should persevere, because it was obvious that Martin had no vocation for the pastorate; but my father is a determined man. Having made up his mind that Martin should be a preacher, he would not be moved from it. In our village a couple of young men resolved to go to America. They were friends of Martin, and persuaded him to join them. He asked my father to give him a fit-out and let him go. But no—the old gentleman was not to be turned from his purpose. Then a temptation came in poor Martin’s way, and he yielded to it in a thoughtless moment, or, perhaps, when greatly excited by an altercation with his father. He took the money and ran away.’

‘He did not go to America?’

‘No, Miss Jordan. He rejoined the same dramatic company with which he had been connected before. That was how he was caught.’

‘And the money?’

‘Some of it was recovered, but what he had done with most of it no one knows—the poor thriftless lad least of all. I dare say he gave away pounds right and left to all who made out a case of need to him.’

Then these two, sitting in the garden perfumed with stocks, heard Eve calling Barbara.

'It is nothing,' said Barbara; 'Eve is tired of polishing her spangles, and so wants me. I cannot go to her now; I must hear the end of your story.'

'I was on my way to this place,' Jasper continued, 'when I had to pass through Prince's Town. I found my other brother there, Walter, who is also devoted to our poor Martin; Walter had found means of communicating with his brother and had contrived plans of escape. He had a horse in readiness, and one day when the prisoners were cutting turf on the moor his comrades built a turfstack round Martin, and the warders did not discover that he was missing till he had made off. Walter persuaded me to remain a day or two in the place to assist in carrying out the escape, which was successfully executed. We got away off Dartmoor, avoided Tavistock, and lost ourselves on these downs, but were making for the Tamar, that we might cross into Cornwall by bridge or ferry or by swimming our horses; and then we thought to reach Polperro and send Martin out of the kingdom in any ship that sailed.'

'Why did you not tell me this at once when you came to our house?' asked Barbara, with a little of her old sharpness.

'Because I did not know you then, Miss Jordan; I could not be sure that you might be trusted.'

She shook her head. 'Oh, Mr. Jasper! I am not trustworthy. I did betray what I believed to be your secret.'

'Your very trustiness made you a traitor,' he answered courteously. 'Your first duty was to your sister.'

'Why did you allow me to suppose that you were the criminal?'

'You had found the prison clothes, and at first I sought to screen my brother. I did not know where Martin was; I wished to give him ample time for escape by diverting suspicion to myself.'

'But afterwards? You ought, later, to have undeceived me,' she said, with a shake in her voice, and a little accent of reproach.

'I shrank from doing that. I thought when you visited Buckfastleigh you would have found out the whole story; but my father was reticent, and you came away without having learned the truth. Perhaps it was pride, perhaps a lingering uneasiness about Martin, perhaps I felt that I could not tell of my dear

brother's fall and disgrace. You were cold and kept me at a distance——'

Then, greatly agitated, Barbara started up.

'Oh, Mr. Jasper!' she said with quivering voice, 'what cruel words I have spoken to you—to you so generous, so true, so self-sacrificing! You never can forgive me; and yet from the depth of my heart I desire your pardon. Oh, Jasper! Mr.'—a sob broke the thread of her words—'Mr. Jasper, when you were ill and unconscious, I studied your face hour after hour, trying to read the evil story of your life there, and all I read was pure and noble and true. How can I make you amends for the wrong I have done you?'

As she stood, humbled, with heaving bosom and throat choking, Eve came with skips and laugh along the gravel walk. 'I have found you!' she exclaimed, and clapped her hands.

'And I—and I——' gasped Barbara—'I have found how I may reward the best of men. There! there!' she said, clasping Eve's hand and drawing her towards Jasper. 'Take her! I have stood between you too long; but, on my honour, only because I thought you unworthy of her.'

She put Eve's hand in that of Jasper, then before either had recovered from the surprise occasioned by her words and action, she walked back into the house, gravely, with erect head, dignified as ever.

(To be continued.)

The Endowment of the Daughter.

THOSE who begin to consider the subject of the working woman discover presently that there is a vast field of inquiry lying quite within their reach, without any trouble of going into slums or inquiring of sweaters. This is the field occupied by the gentlewoman who works for a livelihood. She is not always, perhaps, gentle in quite the old sense, but she is gentle in that new and better sense which means culture, education, and refinement. There are now thousands of these working gentlewomen, and the number is daily increasing. A few among them—a very few—are working happily and successfully; some are working contentedly, others with murmuring and discontent at the hardness of the work and the poorness of the pay. Others again are always trying, and for the most part vainly, to get work—any kind of work—which will bring in money—any small sum of money. This is a dreadful spectacle, to any who have eyes to see, of gentlewomen struggling, snatching, importuning, begging for work. No one knows, who has not looked into the field, how crowded it is, and how sad a sight it presents.

For my own part I think it is a shame that a lady should ever have to stand in the labour-market for hire like a milkmaid at a statute fair. I think that the rush of women into the labour market is a most lamentable thing. Labour, and especially labour which is without organisation or union, has to wage an incessant battle—always getting beaten—against greed and injustice: the natural enemy of labour is the employer, especially the impetunious employer; in this struggle women always get worsted. Again, in whatever trade, calling, or profession they attempt, the great majority of women are hopelessly incompetent. As in the lower occupations, so in the higher, the greatest obstacle to success is incompetence. How should gentlewomen be anything but incompetent? They have not been taught anything special; they have not been 'put through the mill;' mostly they are fit only

for those employments which require the single quality that everybody can claim—general intelligence. Hopeless indeed is the position of that woman who brings into the intellectual labour-market nothing but general intelligence. She is exactly like the labourer who knows no trade and has nothing but his strong frame and his pair of hands. To that man falls the hardest work and the smallest wage. To the woman with general intelligence is assigned the lowest drudgery of intellectual labour. And yet there are so many clamouring for this, or for anything. A few months ago a certain weekly magazine stated that I, the writer, had started an Association for Providing Ladies with Copying Work—all in capitals. The number of letters which came to me by every post in consequence of that statement was incredible. The writers implored me to give them a share of that copying work; they told terrible, heart-rending stories of suffering. Of course, there was no such Association. There is, now that type-writing is fairly established, no copying work left to speak of. Even now the letters have not quite ceased to arrive.

The existence of this army of necessitous gentlewomen is a new thing in the land. That is to say, there have always been ladies who have 'come down in the world'—not a sea-side lodging-house keeper but has known better days; there have always been girls who never expected to be poor: always girls suffered to live in a fool's paradise who ought to have been taught some way of earning their livelihood. Never till now, however, has this army of gentlewomen been so great, or its distress so acute. One reason—it is one which threatens to increase with accelerated rapidity—is the depression of agriculture. I think we hardly realise the magnitude of this great national disaster. We believe that it is only the landlords, or the landlords and farmers, who are suffering. If that were all—but can one member of the body politic suffer and the rest go free from pain? All the trade of the small towns droops with agriculture: the professional men of the country towns lose their practice; clergymen who depend upon glebe, dissenting ministers who depend upon the townspeople, lose their income; the labourers; the craftsmen—why, it bewilders one even to think of the widespread ruin which will follow the agricultural depression if it continues. And every year carriage becomes cheaper, and food products of all kinds are conveyed at lower prices and from greater distances. Every fall in price makes it more difficult to let the farms, drives the rustics in greater numbers from the country to the town, lays the curse of labour

upon thousands of untrained gentlewomen, and makes it more difficult for them to escape in the old way—that of marriage.

Another reason is the enormous increase, during the last thirty years, of the cultivated classes. We have all, except the very lowest, moved upwards. The working-man wears broadcloth and has his club; the tradesman who has grown rich also has his club, his daughters are young ladies of culture, his sons are educated at the public schools and the universities—things perfectly proper and laudable. The thickness of the cultured stratum grows greater every day. But those who belong to the lower part of that stratum—those whose position is not, as yet, strengthened by family connections and the accumulations of generations—are apt to topple and to be blown over at the first cold breath of misfortune. Then the daughters who, in the last generation, would have joined the working girls and become dressmakers in a ‘genteel’ way, join the ranks of distressed gentlewomen.

Everybody knows the way up the social ladder. It has been shown to those below by millions of twinkling feet. It is a broad ladder up which people are always climbing, some slowly, some quickly. From corduroy to broadcloth; from workshop to counter; from shop-boy to master; from shop to office; from trade to profession; from the bed-room over the shop to the great country villa. The other day a bricklayer told me that his grandfather and the first Lord O.’s father were old pals: they used to go poaching together; but the parent of Lord O. was so clever as to open a shop, where he sold what his friend poached. The shop began it, you see. The way up is known to everybody. But there is another way which we seldom regard; it is the way down again. The Family Rise is the commonest phenomenon. Is not the name Legion of those of whom men say, partly with the pride of connecting themselves with greatness, partly with the natural desire, which small men always show, to tear away something of that greatness, ‘Why, I knew him when his father had that shop.’ The Family Fall is less conspicuous. Yet there are always as many going down as climbing up. You cannot, in fact, stay still. You must either climb or slip down—unless, indeed, you have got your leg over the topmost rung, which means the stability of an hereditary title and landed property. We all ought to have hereditary titles and landed property, in order to ensure national prosperity for ever. Novelists do not, as a rule, treat of the Sinking Back because it is a depressing subject. There are many ways of falling. Mostly, the father makes an ass of himself

in the way of business, or speculation; or he dies too soon; or his sons possess none of their father's ability; or they take to drink. Anyhow, down goes the Family, at first slowly, but with ever increasing rapidity, back to its original level. There is no country in the world—certainly not the United States—where a young man may rise to distinction with greater ease than this realm of the Three Kingdoms. There is also none where the families show a greater alacrity in sinking. But the most reluctant to go down, those who cling most tightly to the social level which they think they have reached, are the daughters; so that when misfortunes fall upon them they are ready to deny themselves everything rather than lose the social dignity which they think belongs to them.

Again, a steady feeder of these ranks is the large family of girls. It is astonishing what a number of families there are in which they are all, or nearly all, girls. The father is perhaps a professional man of some kind, whose blamelessness has not brought him solid success, so that there is always tightness. And it is beautiful to remark the cheerfulness of the girls, and how they accept the tightness as a necessary part of the World's Order; and how they welcome each new feminine arrival as if it was really going to add a solid lump of comfort to the family joy. These girls face work from the beginning. Well for them if they have any better training than the ordinary day school, or any special teaching at all.

Another—the most potent cause of all—is the complete revolution of opinion as regards woman's work which has been effected in the course of a single generation. Thirty years ago, if a girl was compelled to earn her bread by her own work, what could she do? There were a few—a very few—who wrote; many very excellent persons held writing to be 'unladylike.' There were a few—a very few—who painted; there were some—but very few, and those chiefly the daughters of actors—who went on the stage. All the rest of the women who maintained themselves and were called, by courtesy, ladies, became governesses. Some taught in schools, where they endured hardness—remember the account of the school where Charlotte Brontë was educated. Some went to live in private houses—think of the governess in the old novel, meek and gentle, snubbed by her employer, bullied by her pupils, and insulted by the footman, until the young Prince came along; some went from house to house as daily governess. Even in teaching they were greatly restricted. Man

was called in to teach dancing; he went round among the schools in black silk stockings, with a kit under his arm, and could caper wonderfully. Woman could only teach dancing at the awful risk of showing her ankles. Who cares now whether a woman shows her ankles or not? Good Heavens! her ankles! Why not show her ankles? It makes one think of Mr. Snodgrass and Mr. Winkle, and of the admiration which those sly dogs openly expressed for a neat pair of ankles. Man, again, taught drawing; man taught music; man taught singing; man taught writing; man taught arithmetic. Latin was not taught because it was unladylike; man taught French and Italian; German was not taught at all. Indeed, had it not been for geography and the use of the globes, and the right handling of the back-board, there would have been nothing at all left for the governess to teach. Forty years ago, however, she was great on the Church Catechism and a martinet as to the Sunday sermon.

It was not every girl, even then, who could teach. I remember one lady who in her young days had refused to teach on the ground that she would have to be hanged for child-murder if she tried. Those who did not teach, unless they married and became mistresses of their own *ménage*, stayed at home until the parents died, and then went to live with a brother or a married sister. What family would be without the unmarried sister, the universal aunt? Sometimes, perhaps, she became a mere unpaid household servant, who could not give notice. But one would fain hope that these were rare cases.

Now, however, all is changed. The doors are thrown wide open. With a few exceptions—to be sure, the Church, the Law, and Engineering are important exceptions—a woman can enter upon any career she pleases. The average woman can do, at any intellectual work, nearly as well as the average man. The old prejudice against the work of women is practically extinct. Love of independence and the newly awakened impatience of the old shackles, in addition to the forces already mentioned, are everywhere driving girls to take up professional lives.

Not only are the doors of the old avenues thrown open: we have created new ways for the women who work. Literature offers a hundred paths, each one with stimulating examples of feminine success. There is journalism, into which women are only now beginning to enter by ones and twos. Before long they will sweep in with a flood. In medicine, which requires arduous study and great bodily strength, they do not enter in large numbers. Acting is a fashionable craze. Art covers as wide a field as literature,

Education in girls' schools of the highest kind has passed into their own hands. Moreover, women can now do many things—and remain gentlewomen—which were formerly impossible. Some keep furniture-shops, some are decorators, some are dressmakers, some make, or sell, embroidery.

In all these professions two things are wanting—natural aptitude and special training. Unfortunately the competition is encumbered and crowded with those who have neither, or else both imperfectly developed.

The present state of things is somewhat as follows:—

The world contains a great open Market, where the demand for first-class work of every kind is practically inexhaustible. In literature everything really good commands instant attention, respect—and payment. But it must be really good. Publishers are always looking about for genius. Editors—even the much-abused editors—are always looking about for good and popular writers. But the world is critical: to become popular requires a combination of qualities, which include special training, education, and natural aptitude. Art again, in every possible branch, offers recognition—and pay—for good work. But it must be really good. The world is even more critical in Art than in Literature. In the theatre managers are always looking about for good plays, good actors, and good actresses. In scholarship, women who have taken Honours at Cambridge command good salaries and an honourable position if they can teach. In music, a really good composer, player, or singer, is always received with joy and the usual solid marks of approval. In this great open Market there is no favouritism possible, because the public—which is scornful of failure, makes no allowance, and receives no excuses—is also generous and quick to recognise success. In this Market clever women have exactly the same chances as clever men. Their work commands the same price. George Eliot is as well paid as Thackeray. And the Market is full of the most splendid prizes both of praise and pudding. It is a most wonderful Market. In all other Markets the stalls are full of good things which the vendors are anxious to sell but cannot: in this Market nothing is offered but it is snapped up greedily by the buyers; there are even, indeed, men who buy up the things before they reach the open Market. In other Markets the cry of those who stand at the stalls is 'Buy, buy, buy.' In this Market it is the buyers who cry out continually, 'Bring out more wares to sell.' Only to think of this Market, and of the thousands of gentlewomen outside, fills the heart with sadness.

For, outside, there is quite another kind of Market. Here there are long lines of stalls behind which stand the gentlewomen eagerly offering their wares. Alas! Here is Art in every shape, but it is not the Art which we can buy. Here are painting and drawing, here are coloured photographs, painted china, art embroideries, and fine work. Here are offered original songs and original music. Here are standing long lines of those who want to teach and are most melancholy because they have no degree or diploma and know nothing. Here are standing those who wait to be hired and who will do anything in which 'general intelligence' will show the way. Lastly, there is a whole quarter—at least a quarter—of the Market filled with stalls covered with MSS.—and there are thousands of women offering these MSS. The publishers and the editors walk slowly along before the stalls and receive the MSS., which they look at and then lay down, though their writers weep and wail and wring their hands. Presently there comes along a man greatly resembling in the expression of his face the wild and savage Wolf trying to smile. His habit is to take up a MS., and presently to express, with the aid of strange oaths and ejaculations, wonder and admiration. 'Fore Gad, Madam!' he says, 'tis fine! 'twill take the town by storm. 'Tis an Immortal Piece! Your own, Madam? Truly 'tis wonderful! Nay, Madam, but I must have it. 'Twill cost you for the printing of it a paltry sixty pounds or so. And for return, believe me, 'twill prove a mere Potosi.' This is the Confidence Trick under another form. The unfortunate woman begs and borrows the money, of which she will never again see one farthing; and if her book be produced, no one will ever buy a copy.

The women at these stalls are always changing. They grow tired of waiting when no one will buy: they go away. A few may be traced. They become type-writers: they become cashiers in shops: they sit in the outer office of photographers and receive the visitors: they 'devil' for literary men: they make extracts: they conduct researches and look up authorities: they address envelopes; some, I suppose, go home again, and contrive to live, somehow, with their relations. What becomes of the rest no man can tell. Only when men get together and talk of these things it is whispered that there is no family, however prosperous, but has its unsuccessful members—no House, however great, which has not its hangers-on and followers, like the *ribauderie* of an army, helpless and penniless.

Considering, therefore, the miseries, drudgeries, insults, and humiliations which await the necessitous gentlewoman in her quest

for work and a living, and the fact that these ladies are increasing in number and likely to increase, I venture to call attention to certain preventive steps which may be applied—not for those who are now in this hell, but for those innocent children whose lot it may be to join the hapless band. The subject concerns all of us who have to work, all who have to provide for our families; it concerns every woman who has daughters: it concerns the girls themselves to such a degree that if they knew or suspected the dangers before them they would cry aloud for prevention, they would rebel, they would strike the Fifth Commandment out of the Tables. So great, so terrible, are the dangers before them.

The absolute duty of teaching girls who may at some future time have to depend upon themselves some trade, calling, or profession, seems a mere axiom, a thing which cannot be disputed or denied. Yet it has not yet even begun to be practised. If any thought is taken at all of this contingency, 'general intelligence' is still relied upon.

There are, however, other ways of facing the future.

In France, as everybody knows, no girl born of respectable parents is unprovided with a *dot*; there is no family, however poor, which does not strive and save in order to find their daughter some kind of *dot*. If she has no *dot*, she remains unmarried. The amount of the *dot* is determined by the social position of the parents: no marriage is arranged without the *dot* forming an important part of the business; no bride goes empty-handed out of her father's house. And since families in France are much smaller than in this country a much smaller proportion of girls go unmarried.

In this country no girls of the lower class and few of the middle class ever have any *dot* at all. They go to their husbands empty-handed, unless, as sometimes happens, the father makes an allowance to the daughter. All they have is their expectation of what may come to them after the father's death, when there will be insurances and savings to be divided. The daughter who marries has no *dot*. The daughter who remains unmarried has no fortune until her father dies: very often she has none after that event.

In Germany, where the custom of the *dot* is not, I believe, so prevalent, there are companies or societies founded for the express purpose of providing for unmarried women. They work, I am told, with a kind of tontine—it is, in fact, a lottery. On the birth of a girl the father inscribes her name on the books of the company, and pays a certain small sum every year on her account. At the age of twenty-five, if she is still unmarried, she receives

the right of living rent free in two rooms, and becomes entitled to a certain small annuity. If she marries she has nothing. Those who marry, therefore, pay for those who do not marry. It is the same principle as with life insurances: those who live long pay for those who die young. If we assume, for instance, that four girls out of five marry, which seems a fair proportion, the fifth girl receives five times her own premium. Suppose that her father has paid 5*l.* a year for her for twenty-one years; she would receive the amount, at compound interest, of 25*l.* a year for twenty-one years—namely, about a thousand pounds.

Only consider what a thousand pounds may mean to a girl. It may be invested to produce 35*l.* a year—that is to say, thirteen shillings and sixpence a week. Such an income, paltry as it seems, may be invaluable; it may supplement her scanty earnings: it may enable her to take a holiday: it may give her time to look about her: it may keep her out of the sweater's hands: it may help her to develop her powers and to step into the front rank. What gratitude would not the necessitous gentlewoman bestow upon any who would endow her with thirteen shillings and sixpence a week? Why, there are Homes where she could live in comfort on twelve shillings, and have a solid eighteenpence to spare. She would even be able to give alms to others not so rich.

Take, then, a thousand pounds—thirty-five pounds a year—as a minimum. Take the case of a professional man who cannot save much, but who is resolved on endowing his daughters with an annuity of at least 35*l.* a year. There are ways and means of doing this which are advertised freely and placed in everybody's hands. Yet they seem to fail in impressing the public. One does not hear among one's professional friends of the endowment of girls. Yet one does hear, constantly, that some one is dead and has left his daughters without a penny.

First of all, the rules and regulations of the Post Office, which are published every quarter, provide what seems the most simple of these ways.

I take one table only, that of the cost of an annuity deferred for twenty-five years. If the child is five years of age, and under six, an annuity of 1*l.*, beginning after twenty-five years, can be purchased for a yearly premium of 12*s.* 7*d.*, or for a payment of 12*l.* 3*s.* 8*d.* The money to be returned in case of the child's death. An annuity of 35*l.*, therefore, would cost a yearly premium of 22*l.* 0*s.* 5*d.*, or a lump sum down of 426*l.* 8*s.* 4*d.*

One or two of the insurance companies have also prepared

tables for the endowment of children. I find, for instance, in the tables issued by the North British and Mercantile that an annual payment of 3*l.* 11*s.* begun at infancy will insure the sum of 100*l.* at twenty-one years of age, with the return of the premium should the child die, or that 35*l.* 10*s.* paid annually will insure the sum of 1,000*l.* There is also in these tables a method of payment by which, should the father die and the premiums be therefore discontinued, the money will be paid just the same. No doubt, if the practice were to spread, every insurance company would take up this kind of business.

It is not every young married man who could afford to pay so large a sum of money as 426*l.* in one lump; on the contrary very few indeed could do so. But suppose, which is quite possible, that he were to purchase, with the first 12*l.* he could save, a deferred annuity of 1*l.* for his child, and so with the next 12*l.*, and so with the next, until he had placed her beyond the reach of actual destitution; and suppose again that his conscience were so much awakened to the duty of thus providing for her that amusement and pleasure would be postponed or curtailed until this duty was performed, just as amusement is not thought of until the rent and taxes and housekeeping are first defrayed: in that case there would be few young married people indeed who would not speedily be able to purchase this small annuity of 35*l.* a year. And with every successive payment the sense of the value of the thing, its importance, its necessity, would grow more and more in the mind; and with every payment would increase the satisfaction of feeling that the child was removed from destitution by one pound a year more. It took a very long time to create in men's minds the duty of life insurance. That has now taken so firm a hold on people that, although the English bride brings no *dot*, the bridegroom is not permitted to marry her until he settles a life insurance upon her. When once the mother thoroughly understands that by the exercise of a little more self-denial her daughter can be rendered independent for life, that self-denial will certainly not be wanting. Think of the vast sums of money which are squandered by the middle classes of this country, even though they are far more provident than the working classes. The money is not spent in any kind of riot: not at all, the middle classes are, on the whole, most decorous and sober: it is spent in living just a little more luxuriously than the many changes and chances of mortal life should permit. It is by lowering the standard of living that the money must be saved for the endowment of the daughters; and since the children cost less in infancy than when they grow older, it is then that the saving must be made. Every

one knows that there are thousands of young married people who can only by dint of the strictest economy make both ends meet. It is not for them that I speak. Another voice, far more powerful than mine, should thunder into their hearts the selfishness and the wickedness of bringing into the world children for whom they can make no provision whatever, and who are destined to be thrown into the battle-field of labour provided with no other weapons than the knowledge of reading and writing. It is bad enough for the boys; but as for the girls—they had better have been thrown as soon as born to the Lions. I speak rather to those who are called the better sort, who live comfortably upon the year's income, which is not too much, and who look forward to putting their boys in the way of an ambitious career, and to marrying their daughters. But as for the endowment of the girls, they have not even begun to think about it. Their conscience has not been yet awakened, their fears not yet aroused; they look abroad and see their friends struck down by death or disaster, but they never think it may be their turn next. And yet the happiness to reflect, if death or disaster does come, that your girls are safe!

One sees here, besides, a splendid opening for the rich uncle, the benevolent godfather, the affectionate grandfather, the kindly aunt, the successful brother. They will come bearing gifts—not the silver cup, if you please, but the Deferred Annuity. 'I bring you, my dear, in honour of your little Molly's birthday, an increase of five pounds to her Deferred Annuity. This makes it up to twenty pounds, and the money-box getting on, you say, to another pound. Capital! we shall have her thirty-five pounds in no time now.' What a noble field for the uncle!

The endowment of the daughter is essentially a woman's question. The bride, or at least her mother for her, ought to consider that though every family quiver varies in capacity with the income, her own lot may be to have a quiver full. Heaven forbid, as Montaigne said, that we should interfere with the feminine methods, but common prudence seems to dictate the duty of this forecast. Let, therefore, the demand for endowment come from the bride's mother. All that she would be justified in asking of a man whose means are as yet narrow, would be such an endowment, gradually purchased, as would keep the girls from starvation.

For my own part I think that no woman should be forced to work at all, except at such things as please her. When a woman marries, for instance, she voluntarily engages herself to do a vast quantity of work. To look after the house and to bring up the children involves daily, unremitting labour and thought. If she has

a vocation for any kind of work, as for Art, or Letters, or Teaching, let her obey the call and find her happiness. Generally, she has none. The average woman—I make this statement with complete confidence—hates compulsory work: she hates and loathes it. There are, it is true, some kinds of work which must be done by women. Well, there will always be enough for these occupations among women who prefer work to idleness.

There is another very serious consideration. There is only so much work—a limited quantity—in the world: so many hands for whom occupation can be found—and the number of hands wanted does not very greatly exceed that of the male hands ready for it. Now by giving this work to women we take it from the men. If we open the Civil Service to women, we take so many posts from the men, which we give to the women, *at a lower salary*; if they become cashiers, accountants, clerks, they take these places from the men, *at a lower salary*. Always they take lower pay, and turn the men out. Well, the men must either go elsewhere, or they must take the lower pay. In either case the happiest lot of all—that of marriage—is rendered more difficult because the men are made poorer; the position of the toiler becomes harder because he gets worse pay; and man's sense of responsibility for the women of his family is destroyed. Nay, in some cases the men actually live, and live contentedly, upon the labour of their wives. But when all is said about women, and their rights and wrongs, and their work and place, and their equality and their superiority, we fall back at last upon nature. There is still, and will always remain with us, the sense in man that it is his duty to work for his wife, and the sense in woman that nothing is better for her than to receive the fruits of her husband's labour.

Let us endow the Daughters: those who are not clever, in order to save them from the struggles of the Incompetent and the hopelessness of the Dependent; those who are clever, so as to give them time for work and training. The Bread-winner may die: his powers may cease: he may lose his clients, his reputation, his popularity, his business; in a thousand forms misfortune and poverty may fall upon him. Think, then, of the happiness with which he would then contemplate that endowment of a Deferred Annuity. And the endowment will not prevent or interfere with any work the girls may wish to do. It will even help them in their work. My brothers, let our girls work if they wish: perhaps they will be happier if they work: let them work at whatever kind of work they may desire; but not—oh! not—because they must.

WALTER BESANT.

Lost and Won.

THE white-witch beckons wi' finger thin,
 'A veil hangs low at mouth o' the cave,
 One maugre the veil may entrance win
 (The morning star sets pale for the sun).
 Red wi' dawn lies yon moaning wave—
 Lost and won, my dear,' quotha, 'lost and won.'

'A veil of ice in the far forest
 Wonners within their forms shine through
 In the cave who quire while burns the west,
 Till the morning star sets pale for the sun,
 Who breaketh the veil his deed shall rue—
 (Lost and won, my dear,' quotha, 'lost and won.'

'Rue for a year and a day; but what!
 Soldan or Sophy might rue the same
 And doughty of heart bethink him not
 (The morning star sets pale for the sun).
 Such guerdon gained, of or thrall or shame,
 Lost or won, my dear, is it lost or won?'

'Be it far,' he saith, 'be it far from me
 A revel wi' faëry women fine;
 Helène, Helène, when for sight of thee
 (The morning star set pale for the sun)
 Days many forlorn doth the old King pine.'
 'Lost and won, my dear,' quotha, 'lost and won.'

'What though, what though to her silk-soft bower
 Whelmed in the forest she steps no more,
 Though search be ended fro' hall fro' tower
 And the morning star set pale for the sun,
 Thorough the dark fells, thorough the shore—'
 ('Lost and won, my dear,' quotha, 'lost and won.')

'What, though he a great King's heir, Helène,
And I but a Squire of low degree,
Long I'll lament me, for this her pain
(The morning star lies under the sun)
Nor Elfin harp shall be struck for me.'
'Lost or won,' quoth the white-witch, 'lost or won.'

'Good, and so be it, faire Sir,' she saith,
'Rede none doth 'monish, nor rune control.'
He stands astonied wi' bated breath,
The morning star set pale for the sun.
'The veil in the forest is made my goal.'
'Lost and won, my dear,' quotha, 'lost and won.'

Weariful speeding down evil ways,
Dusk in the noontide and dark at eve;
Lo you! at midnight a wild harp plays
While the morning star is away wi' the sun.
Shifting and mocking the lilt deceive.
'Lost and won, my dear,' quotha, 'lost and won.'

The mouth that sang them he mote not see,
Nigh and so nigh, but he peers in vain,
'Fair dames of Elfland do sigh for thee—'
(The morning star is away wi' the sun).
The Squire laughs out with 'Helène, Helène.'
'Lost and won, my dear,' quotha, 'lost and won.'

'O what is yon light that gleameth wide?
In heaven the moon is but three days old,
And a full moon anchored on yon hill-side
(The morning star lies under the sun)
Casts a weird whiteness right strange, right cold.'
'Lost and won, my dear, is it lost or won?'

'Hey, 'tis the mouth o' the veiled cave,
Hey for the moon-mock, on, hie on.'
One mighty stroke wi' his glittering glaive,
The morning star has sunk wi' the sun,
The Squire is through and the veil is down.
'Lost and won, my dear,' quotha, 'lost and won.'

It crackles wi' shatter, and tinkling small
 Their lights go out, and the Elf-dames fly,
 Their wild harps clang while they call, they call
 (The morning star set pale for the sun)
 'A year and a day shall the Elf-ban lie.'
 'Lost and won,' they cry, 'it was lost and won.'

The Squire would after, would fain speed on
 But (for to be short) he mote not move,
 The deep ban bindeth him, might is gone
 (The morning star set pale for the sun),
 His manful limbs do its potence prove.
 'Lost and won, my dear,' quotha, 'lost and won.'

'Long is the time. Be it time, good sooth,
 Be it night, be it day in this weird place?
 I am thrallèd fast and feel my youth.
 The morning star lies under the sun—
 Made over to these of timeless race—'
 'Lost or won, my dear, is it lost or won?'

'I know not wherefore; y-waxen dim
 Shifts a great reason that swayed my thought.
 Why? But hold fast is the best for him
 (The morning star set pale for the sun)
 Who knew at the start what deed he wrought.'
 'Lost and won, my dear, is it lost or won?'

'It is very long. A low voice plains
 Far in the cave. I would it were still;
 And would I mote sleep; yea all my pains
 (The morning star is waiting the sun)
 'Twould comfort of sleep mote I drink my fill.'
 'Lost or won, my dear, is it lost or won?'

His gyves give way, he doth sink to ground,
 A little moment is sleep full sweet,
 His good glaive falls with a clash of sound;
 The morning star grows pale for the sun,
 He wakes; red dawn-rays lie on his feet.
 'Lost or won, my dear, is it lost or won?'

Far in the cave sits a faire ladie
 Bound to her settle wi' silken strands,
 'I remember me, I remember me!
 The morning star grows pale for the sun,
 Lo! this was my quest in the weird elf-lands.'
 'Lost and won, my dear,' quotha, 'lost and won.'

'A year and a day' small Elf-dames rave,
 He kneels at her feet, 'O well is me,
 He severs her gyves wi' his trusty glaive,
 The morning star sets pale for the sun,
 They speed, they are forth the maiden free,
 Lost or won, my dear, was it lost or won?'

'O! I am happy,—at this good hour
 Hand in hand on the sparkling dew,'
 She saith, 'down faring to yon dear tower,
 Where the morning star hangs pale by the sun,
 And welcome shall meet us, full great, full true,'
 'Lost and won, my dear,' quotha, 'lost and won.'

'Thou'lt take a kiss fro' thy sire, the king,
 Of me is aught thou would'st take, ladie?'
 'Faire Sir,' she saith, 'a kiss and a ring'
 (The morning star has set by the sun)
 'A ring and a kiss, I'd take fro' thee,
 For lost is won, faire Sir,' she saith, 'lost is won.'

JEAN INGELow.

Cold Winds.

IN all matters relating to health there is no more important subject to be considered than the state of the atmosphere. To organic nature, whether animal or vegetable, the air is the first necessary of existence, and its condition therefore is of the greatest moment to us. Being a gaseous and elastic body, it is subject to great alterations from a variety of causes, and its tenuity is such that the least difference in temperature or weight between neighbouring localities causes a movement from the colder to the warmer region, or from the area of higher pressure to the lower. These flowings of the air from one district to another we call Wind. Were the atmosphere to remain perfectly quiescent, simply resting on the earth without ever being stirred, it would long ago have been rendered poisonous by the deleterious exhalations emanating from the ground and from decaying matter, just like the stagnant water of a pond which has neither inlet nor outlet, and life would have become insupportable. Its mobility, however, is the principal factor in determining the climate of different countries, and indeed of adjacent towns and villages, and it has been truly remarked that the wind not only contributes to, but it constitutes, the weather. It carries on its wings the balmy, refreshing properties of the ocean, the mountain, the valley, and the plain; or, on the other hand, it conveys the hot, suffocating, sand-laden air of the desert, and the noxious, miasmatic substances of swamps and morasses; in fact it is a huge sponge which, as it moves onward, collects the characteristics of the surfaces over which it is travelling; cold and warmth, dryness and dampness, wholesome and unwholesome effluvia are all the same so far as the absorbent powers of the atmosphere are concerned. These facts are borne in mind by the medical profession when advising patients as to the proper localities to visit in search of health. The consumptive and weakly constituted are sent to places open to mild breezes, but where the hills

intercept the colder air-currents from north and east. The more robust, who require a keen bracing atmosphere, go to neighbourhoods where they have the full benefit of the invigorating breezes from cooler quarters.

As already stated, the air moves from cold and high barometer regions towards warm and low barometer regions. Now, if we examine the meteorological charts of the world for summer and winter respectively, we obtain at a glance a very accurate representation of this assertion. In summer, the land being more heated than the sea, the thermometer is higher and the barometer lower over the continents than over the oceans. The winter conditions are exactly the reverse of these, the cold over part of Europe, Asia, and America being intense, the average temperature for January being as much as eighty degrees below freezing-point in some parts of Siberia, and more than seventy degrees below in the far north of America, while the barometer in each continent goes up very high. The circulation of the atmosphere is beautifully symmetrical in accordance with these variations. There is a general flow of air from the sea to the land in summer, the south-west monsoon of India and the Eastern seas being perhaps the most prominent example, but on all coasts similar movements are observed. In winter, we see the cold air passing from the land towards the sea, as evidenced in the north-east monsoon and the north-westerly winds on the east coasts of America and Asia. Whether it be summer or winter, the winds are affected by a variety of circumstances which tend to modify them considerably; their speed is regulated by the difference in the weight of the atmosphere over neighbouring districts; the amount of vapour they carry is augmented or diminished by the objects over which they pass, absorbing the moisture from rivers, lakes, and seas, but depositing it when crossing the cold mountain ranges. In this way the winds of many localities have peculiarities of their own which depend in a great measure upon the physical conditions of the surrounding country.

As we are dealing only with cold winds, it is necessary that we should have a clear notion of what a cold wind is. Let us endeavour to gather a few ideas on the subject from actual facts. Ordinary folks of course run away with the notion that certain winds are intensely cold, whereas, as a simple matter of fact, they may be warmer than the air was on previous days. Take, for instance, two days in January of the present year. New-Year's

day in London was, according to the thermometer, the coldest day of the month, the temperature being as low as twenty-four degrees. There was, however, very little movement in the air, and as a result no one felt the least inconvenience; it was a bright, clear, enjoyable day. Just a fortnight later, on the 15th, we were all complaining of the bitter cold; everyone hurried along 'with blue-cold nose and wrinkled brow;' and why? not because of the cold registered by the thermometer—it stood at thirty-five degrees, or three degrees above the freezing-point, and eleven degrees higher than on the 1st—but because of our own personal sensations, due entirely to the dryness of the wind and the rapidity with which it moved. We have seen that the air was many degrees warmer when most persons would have declared it to be intensely cold. Our bodies are so constituted that they throw off a certain quantity of moisture which is taken by the air; but it is obvious that the sponge-like atmosphere will absorb our moisture according to its own hygrometric state; if it is very moist and damp, the flow of the moisture is checked and we feel hot and feverish; if, on the other hand, the air is excessively dry, it licks up from us more than the human body can safely dispense with, and it is this loss which makes us feel cold and chilly. While the air is still we do not feel a very low temperature to be nearly so cold as when the thermometer is comparatively high, but with a dry wind blowing. In everyday life we have excellent witnesses to the fact in the simple action of fanning the face, throwing open the doors and windows, or standing in a narrow passage through which the air is passing freely. In each case we feel the cooling effect of the air in motion removing the moisture from the skin, and in losing moisture we lose heat. As Dr. Arthur Mitchell says: 'The quantity of heat which our bodies lose in this way is far from insignificant, and the loss cannot be sustained without involving extensive and important physiological actions, and without influencing the state of health. In feeble and delicate constitutions the resources of nature prove insufficient to meet the demand made on them, and a condition of disease ensues.' It will be seen, then, that when we say a wind is very cold it means nothing more than that the evaporation which the wind promotes in our bodies is so great that we are giving up our own heat, without the atmosphere itself being necessarily so cold as we imagine it to be.

These considerations will help us to understand the varieties of

cold winds which are characteristic of certain neighbourhoods, and which have so marked an influence upon the public health. Starting with the infliction which we have to bear annually at home, we shall be better able to appreciate our position when we come to deal with the visitations to which other parts of the world are subject. To us the *East* wind of winter and early spring is indeed a sore trial, upsetting even the temper of the patient and estimable Mr. Jarndyce. We experience it when the vast continental area from Germany to China is frozen hard; the ground gives off no moisture, and the air, as it moves towards the ocean in search of warmth, passes over us with only the smallest addition of dampness from the North Sea, and we consequently feel its searching effects, penetrating as it does to the very marrow, and, owing to our general unpreparedness to cope with the never-ceasing changes to which the British Isles are liable, we feel colder than is absolutely necessary. The east winds were once described by an old writer as of an extraordinary degree of cold, they are so extremely dry; but that was at a time when the cold winds of other countries were practically unknown to us. That they are neither good for man nor beast is clearly shown, whenever they prevail, in the Registrar-General's Returns. Weak persons suffering from bronchial and other diseases of the respiratory organs are quite unable to withstand the demands it makes upon the system, and they quickly succumb in large numbers.

While, however, admitting the personal discomforts of this unwelcome visitor, we must not suppose that it is devoid of good qualities. Its value to agriculture is not to be over-estimated; the soil, sodden with the rains of autumn and winter, requires the drying process which it undergoes during the east wind, the surface of the land being more fit for farming operations afterwards than had it been allowed to remain loaded with water, facilitating tillage and pulverising the top dressings on grass lands; and it is for this reason that our farmers assert that a peck of March dust is worth a king's ransom, thereby indicating the enormous advantage of the thorough process of drying which the desiccating blast performs. It also destroys in large numbers the larvæ of insects which would otherwise become the plague both of man and of vegetation. There can be no doubt too that, although unpleasant while it lasts, and weeding out so many of the weak and sickly, it really leaves our constitutions healthier and more vigorous by the copious extraction of impurities which are fostered by milder winds.

Fortunately for us the position of the British Isles tends to ameliorate the severity of the coldest wind. The warm ocean immediately surrounding our shores insures us a milder climate than if we were differently situated, and the result is that a temperature as low as zero, Fahrenheit, is seldom recorded, and it is a very rare circumstance to have a strong east wind blowing when the thermometer is many degrees below the freezing-point (thirty-two degrees), or we should experience a wind of the severity of some of those which visit other climates, and which are mentioned in the following pages.

The *Mistral* is the north-west wind which is the scourge of the South of France in winter and spring. The mountain ranges of the Cevennes being covered with snow, and the shores of the Mediterranean being many degrees warmer, the icy cold air rolls down the slopes of the mountains with terrific violence, and, invading Provence and Languedoc, destroys the vineyards, uproots trees, throws down buildings, and is so intensely dry that it withers every green thing. According to Strabo the *melamboreas* precipitated men from their chariots and stripped them of their arms and vestments. Locally the saying is that the three plagues of the country are the Parliament, the Mistral, and the Durance. Like our own east wind, it does some good as well as a great deal of mischief, as it renders the air more salubrious by dispelling the noxious vapours from stagnant waters and marshes. In ancient times it was personified as the most dreaded of the gods of the district. The conditions of atmospheric pressure favouring the Mistral are a high barometer over Europe and a low barometer over the Gulf of Lyons.

The *Bise* is a similar and excessively cold northerly wind in the Swiss and French Alps.

The *Etesian* winds of the northern shores of the Mediterranean have various appellations, according to their direction: the northerly are called *Tramontana*; the north-easterly, *Greco* or *Gregala*; and the easterly, *Levante*. On the Adriatic shores of Italy they sometimes blow with great force, and, coming from the mountainous districts, they are very cold and dry.

The *Bora* is an intensely cold, violent, and boisterous wind which visits the Dalmatian and Istrian coasts of the Adriatic and the north-eastern shores of the Black Sea. The two localities present the same geographical features in the mountain ranges running along the coast, so that a description of the Bora of Novorossisk, a

Black Sea port at the foot of the Caucasian range, will suffice for both. A perfectly smooth sea, and a clear sky over the summits of the hills, are followed by the appearance of small white clouds above the heights; they gradually increase and presently begin to be agitated; the air is restless, and squalls follow each other in quick succession; then small patches of cloud are torn away from the main body and driven rapidly down the slopes of the hills, and when halfway to the sea they disperse. With incredible fury the storm comes down the mountains, while the sea is lashed into foam and spray, and a dense salt mist of whipped-up sea-water covers all objects on board ship with an ever-increasing ice-crust. It is too dangerous to move about on shore, as the risk of injury is so great from falling bodies, stones as large as one's fist, slates, and other heavy materials, while the strongest buildings are shaken by the fearful force of the wind. The sea is in so frightful a commotion that ships are driven on shore, or founder at their anchors. The destructive effects of this cold blast are only felt on the coast as far as the mountains; a short distance inland the wind fails entirely. (In its formation and general characteristics the Bora is very similar to the Helm wind on the hills of Cumberland and North Yorkshire.) It may be interesting to note that Herr Baron Wrangel has suggested a plan for minimising the effects of this storm by boring tunnels or cutting deep gorges through the hills, so that the air should be drawn from one side to the other without being cooled to such an extent as it is by having to pass over the summit.

Passing into Asia we find the enormous tract of country from the Ural Mountains eastward to be highly favourable to a degree of cold which is not known in Europe. The vast plains of Siberia are covered with snow and frozen hard for months together, and any high wind makes the atmosphere a terrible agent for destruction. A north-east gale bringing with it a very low temperature and clouds of snow is called a *Buran*. To travellers, those who are not accustomed to the climate, this wind is simply horrible; but the inhabitants are so inured to cold that they take but little notice of it, pursuing their avocations and going on their journeys as we should with an ordinary breeze. Apparently they have some reason for treating the *Buran* with contempt, as they have a more formidable phenomenon to deal with, the hard frosts and snowstorms of December being alternated by a north-westerly storm which is named the *Purga*. This is neither a snow-drift

nor a simple Buran. The calm weather of the Lower Yenissei district is followed by a hurricane, which in its fury takes up the frozen snow, and as it is too cold and dry to absorb the icy particles, the air becomes filled with a dense cloud of dust, and heaven and earth become one chaotic mass of finely powdered ice, which fills the eyes, stops the breath, and insinuates itself through the smallest openings in clothing. Reindeer with their sledges and loads are overturned in the snow, it is hopeless for travellers to attempt to make headway; indeed they cannot see anything a few feet away, and their only course is to remain stationary until the storm is over. A Purga seldom lasts less than twenty-four hours; frequently it extends, with but slight interruptions, over three, six, and even twelve days. During the progress of the storm the thermometer falls to sixty and sometimes eighty degrees below zero, Fahrenheit, or from ninety to one hundred and ten degrees below the freezing-point. Even at Wladiwostock on the Amoor coast of the Sea of Japan, in about the same latitude as Nice and Biarritz, the north-westerly storms coming from the Siberian steppes send the thermometer down to about thirty degrees below zero, with a piercingly cold atmosphere. Needless to state that this baneful wind causes numbers of deaths and brings untold misery to the inhabitants of this frigid climate. The mere relation of the degree of cold registered by the thermometer sends a shiver through us—cold so intense that were we to lay hold with our bare hands on a piece of iron of the same temperature, the flesh would be, to the sensations, *burnt* off as if the iron had been red-hot.

Crossing Behring's Strait into the American continent, we there have in the *Blizzard* of the North-Western States an almost exact counterpart of the Purga of Siberia. The snow-covered prairies, the calm, bright, and pleasant atmosphere, although of low temperature, are what precede both the Purga and the Blizzard; but the latter is probably influenced, both as to its origin and its violence, by the range of the Rocky Mountains. In spite of the snow and its attendant cold, a brilliant sun is shining, and a light, balmy, southerly breeze may be gently wafted along, making the air most delightful and exhilarating; but a few minutes suffice to alter the whole scene. A cloud is seen advancing from the north-west, and in a short time it spreads with fearful rapidity. It is another Purga cloud of ice-dust, and its effects are the same. The harrowing details of the Blizzard of last January will be in the recollection of everybody. It was death

to anyone who ventured out of doors; those who were unfortunate enough to be caught in it were either instantly suffocated or were driven mad, and in the piercing blast could think of no better means of safety than to tear off their own clothing—utter despair depriving them of their reason. Hundreds of human beings and thousands of cattle were lost in this one visitation, which was felt through the whole of the district west of the Mississippi river as far south as Texas. Marvellous changes of temperature are observed with these furious hurricanes: such a fall as that reported in the recent Blizzard, from seventy-four degrees above zero to twenty-eight degrees below—a change of one hundred and twelve degrees in twenty-four hours—seems incredible; but this, large as it appears, was far surpassed in rapidity by the fluctuations of temperature certified by the sergeant in charge of the Government reporting station at Denver, Colorado, in January, 1875. ‘The sudden changes of temperature at this station on January 14 and 15 seem to have been some of the most remarkable ever known. The newspaper reports of them were scarcely believed, and numerous inquiries by scientific men and others were made for the readings of the signal service thermometers during these changes.’ At 9 P.M. on the 14th, with the wind at north-east, the temperature was 1° Fahrenheit, at 9.15, with the wind at south-east, it was 20°, and at 9.35 it had reached 40°, a rise of 39° in a little over half an hour. Next day, half an hour before noon, with the wind in the south-west, the thermometer stood at 52°, and an hour later, the wind having gone round to north-east, the mercury had dropped to 4°, a total fall of 48°! At several of the more northern stations the cold winds send the thermometer down to between forty and sixty degrees below zero (—59° at Pembina, in Dakota, December, 1879, and Fort Benton, in Montana, December, 1880).

The *Northers* of the Gulf of Mexico are a continuation of the Blizzard to the far south, but they are more frequently the result of a very high barometer over the States, and the gradient between the mainland and the permanent low pressure of the tropics causes a very violent northerly gale and bitterly cold weather all round the Gulf, numerous shipping casualties occurring on the southern shores. Over a great part of inland Texas the thermometer falls to as much as fifteen degrees below zero. Along the coast close to the warm waters of the Gulf the mercury has been down to fourteen degrees at Indianola, and eighteen degrees at Browns-

ville and Galveston; while further east, Mobile has recorded fourteen degrees, Pensacola seventeen, New Orleans twenty, and Cedar Keys twenty-two degrees. Such low temperatures considerably damage the sugar-cane, orange, and other crops of these otherwise tropical climates. The cold is also felt on the coast of Mexico and Yucatan, but not to such an extent, and it is probable that to one of these Northerners is to be attributed the heavy snowstorm which visited Anatto Bay in Jamaica on December 15, 1823. On the Pacific side of Central America these cold northerly winds crossing the mountains are named, from the localities they affect, the *Tehuantepec* and the *Papagayo*.

Having thus far dealt with the principal cold winds of the Northern Hemisphere, we must consider those on the other side of the equator, where of course the seasons are reversed, being winter there when it is summer with us. Immediately after crossing the line we find regions of cold, owing to the proximity of the high mountain ranges of the Andes. In the passes through which the caravans journey between Guayaquil and Quito, tremendous storms of cold wind tear down the mountain-sides, overturning horse and rider, mules and their loads, and hurling them over the precipices. In consequence of this violence traffic has to be suspended for weeks together. The storm begins at sunrise, increases till the afternoon, then decreases till sunset. In these vast unpeopled tracts of bleak mountain districts and on the table-lands it has been stated that the thermometer falls below the freezing-point every night in the year, while in the daytime it frequently mounts to ninety degrees.

Farther south, but still within the tropics, we have the *Puna* in the neighbourhood of Lake Titicaca, in latitude 16° south, the most desiccating, withering blast that we know of on the face of the earth. Its name indicates a difficulty of breathing, and it fully justifies the appellation. It is peculiar to the table-land of *Puno*, about 500 miles long by 100 miles broad, situated between two chains of the Andes. The south-east trade wind passing across the high eastern chain deposits its moisture in snow and rain on the Brazilian side, and by the time it has passed the summit and is descending on the western side it has become so intensely dry that dead animal and vegetable matter has not time to decay before it is mummified by the parching rigour of the blast. Men have to veil their faces for protection from the fearful atmosphere. The whole region is a desolate wilderness, in which here and there a withered tuft of herbage may be seen, on which the llamas,

and other animals that may chance to wander here, feed. Peruvians do not require to undergo a process of artificial embalming after death, as their exposure on this plain effectually extracts every vestige of moisture from the body. In the Museum of the Royal College of Surgeons is to be seen the mummified body of a Peruvian preserved in this manner, and it has now been at Lincoln's Inn for nearly sixty years. Even in this low latitude temperatures of from twenty to thirty degrees below the freezing-point are experienced.

Over the pampas of Southern Brazil and Paraguay the decrease of temperature sets in early in March, and throughout the winter they are liable to the *Pampero* or *Minuano*. Being in the Southern Hemisphere the cold winds are from a southern point of the compass, the Pampero being from the south-west. South and south-east winds bring with them icy cold rain, driving it through the crevices of the badly built houses and making it very uncomfortable for travellers. Sometimes the wind may be from the north-east, but suddenly a change takes place to the south-west, the clouds clear away, and the dry cold Pampero blows furiously. A curious result of this sudden change is known in Brazil as the *era*, a kind of severe rheumatism in the joints; even glass is said to crack, and sometimes break. Like the Bora there are local signs for predicting the advent of the Pampero, the change being indicated in Paraguay by the Island of Asuncion being under beautiful clear weather, while the top of the Chaco mountain has over or above it thick black cloud-banks from which dart vivid flashes of lightning. The storm raises a terrific and dangerous sea in the Rio de la Plata, and dismasts ships.

In South Africa the mountain ranges running from east to west lead to the coldest winds being chiefly northerly, between north-west and north-east, when the mountains are under snow, and in some localities the nights become very cold. In the neighbourhood of Cape Town the south-east wind is coldest, as it loses much of its moisture in crossing the mountainous district between Table Bay and Cape Agulhas.

Australia has its shivering breezes, although perhaps not to such an extent as the larger continents. The cold southerly winds of South Australia and Victoria become westerly winds as they enter Queensland. The Australian Alps and Mount Wellington are covered with snow, and the cold atmosphere reaches Brisbane and the neighbourhood, where at times tremendous hailstorms occur, the stones being of very large dimensions, and the temperature

of the air falling several degrees below the freezing-point. Similar storms are recorded in New South Wales.

Finally, in New Zealand there are the *Southerly Busters*, following the dry hot 'nor'-wester' which parches the soil and withers vegetation. A dark cloud appears on the southern or south-western horizon, and, quickly spreading, it bursts with a heavy downpour of icy cold rain, which renders the atmosphere deliciously cool and refreshing after the great heat of previous days.

From the foregoing brief descriptions of the principal cold air-currents of the world it will be conceded by the inhabitants of the British Isles that, after all the disagreeableness and the great discomforts of our east winds, we have much to be thankful for in the fact that we are not so badly off as many other nations, although perhaps we might not be disposed to consider the hapless mortals when we are in the midst of a spell of easterly weather.

HY. HARRIES.

In the North Atlantic the mountain ranges running from east to west tend to the coldest winds being chiefly westerly, between north-west and north-east, when the mountains are under snow, and in some localities the slight breeze very cold. In the neighbourhood of Cape Town the coldest wind is easterly, and less much of the mountain in crossing the mountainous districts between Table Bay and Cape Agulhas.

Australia is a striking instance, although perhaps not so much an extent as the larger continent. The cold southerly winds of South Australia and Victoria become westerly winds as they enter Queensland. The Australian Alps and Mount Wellington are covered with snow, and the cold atmosphere reaches Brisbane and the neighbourhood, where at times tremendous hailstorms occur, the storm being of very large dimensions and the temperature

The Runaways.

THE same year that Lady Jane Magnus presented her beautiful daughter Adela, Lord Glencore was the match of the season. Just of age, of an old family, with vast possessions, and a heavy rent-roll, swelled by a long minority, the instant the hawk-like eye of Lady Jane fell on the young peer a thrill of joy assured her that there stood the husband Providence had provided for Adela.

Little mattered it to Lady Jane that Lord Glencore was silent, awkward, most painfully shy, given to blush to the very roots of his hair if a woman but addressed the most commonplace remark to him. Adela had been too carefully trained to pin her faith to externals. Besides, as regarded marriage, Lady Jane always arranged these little affairs for her daughters. She had brought out three before the advent of the lovely Adela, and not one of them, she inwardly boasted, had ever had reason to fling a syllable of reproach at their mother.

'You think it is all right, mother, do you?' Adela ventured to say, growing a little uneasy when the end of the season drew near, and Lord Glencore had never addressed a single remark to her which could by any possibility be construed into love.

'Perfectly right, dear. The society papers have coupled your names together; an approaching marriage has more than once been hinted at, and, as a matter of course, now, wherever people ask us *he* is asked.'

'I know; still other people are not the same as he.'

'Quite the same. I understand the position perfectly well, my love. Men of his kind would remain silent until doomsday unless a suggestion was made to them.'

'Well, but——'

'Dear child, you may leave it to me. Don't you think so?' And an expression of mild reproach was shot from the maternal

eye. 'Do you fancy that, if I saw the slightest shadow of uncertainty, I should accept Sir Joscelyn's invitation for Goodwood, knowing that Glencore won't be there?'

'Won't he! Why, where is he going?'

'Nowhere. I ascertained that, you may be sure. He is obliged to remain in town. There'll not be a soul left for him to speak to. Some business with his lawyers, he said—and said it in a very pointed way too.'

'Stammering and getting fiery red,' said the would-be *fiancée* disdainfully.

Lady Jane shook her head. 'Never mind the manner; it is the meaning we are concerned in. He joins us immediately after at Thorndean. There you will see that everything will be satisfactorily arranged. Lady Somerton has such a happy way of letting young people be thrown together, and from the first I have seemed to be very much guided by her.'

Adela embraced her mother with graceful effusion.

'How clever you are!' she said admiringly; 'you have managed beautifully, for I did want to enjoy Goodwood free. When I am a countess, Mamma, it shall be very nice for you.'

II.

CERTAINLY Goodwood week had left London wonderfully empty. You did not meet a soul you knew.

Lord Glencore repeated this fact to himself most cheerily as he walked along Piccadilly with a heart and a step as light as a bird's.

It seems an impossible circumstance that a stalwart young giant standing over six feet in his stockings, his own master, able to do what he liked and go where he chose, should be in abject thralldom to a plain little middle-aged woman who was bent on compelling him to marry her daughter. 'And I feel as if I should be made to do it too,' poor Glencore had said of late, driven into his last corner by the congratulations of all Lady Jane's friends, to say nothing of those horrid paragraphs in those horrid papers, some of which had gone so far as to mention an early date being fixed 'for the marriage of a lovely *débutante* of this season and a young earl recently of age, whose ancestors came over with the Conqueror.' Glencore had it in his heart to envy the shopmen, the cabdrivers, the crossing-sweepers—to envy anyone not singled out by Lady Jane Magnus to be her son-in-law.

If he could but pluck up courage to say he did not mean anything, never had meant anything, never meant to mean anything—that he was quite happy as he was—that he never intended to marry anyone—what would he not give! But in face of that terrible Lady Jane and her lovely statuesque daughter he felt paralysed and filled with an abject conviction that he would have to succumb. If he had only some one to confide in, some one whose advice he felt was given for his good! but the poor young fellow stood, as the possessors of vast properties often do, absolutely friendless and alone. His kindly simple nature was despised by those around him. Without parents or any near relatives he had been brought up by strangers, who had surrounded him by such unnecessary cares and ridiculous precautions, that now, when he was a man with full liberty given, he was no more able to make good use of it than a grown-up baby would be.

Full of a wild scheme which had lately come to him, that he would run off to some far-distant country, he was mapping out the details as he walked along, so occupied that he forgot how far he had come, until with a sudden start he pulled himself up. He was passing the Albert Hall, close to that pleasant row of houses in one of which lived Lady Jane.

The knowledge that he could walk boldly by and fling a look of defiance at the papered windows and closed shutters—as he had done the day before—sent a thrill of satisfaction through the young man. He drew himself up and turned his head to—when, oh agony! exactly as he was opposite to it the door opened, and a voice called out ‘Glencore!’

‘Freddy! Is it you?’ Lord Glencore managed to say, seeing he was addressed by a weasel-faced young gentleman between sixteen and seventeen. ‘Why, how came you here? Is-s-s your mother—Lady Jane—with you?’

Freddy’s eyes were apparently so educated that in order to give full expression to one he was forced to shut the other, and regarding Lord Glencore through this single optic he said, ‘You bet. If she was, I shouldn’t be here.’

Glencore’s heart seemed restored to its native position. ‘I’m very glad to see you,’ he said, closing his hand over the little fin Freddy had extended to him; ‘it’s quite a surprise to me.’

‘Here, I say,’ said the astute Freddy significantly, ‘what’s up? How is it you ain’t down there with them?’

‘Well, I couldn’t—I have—that is—there is some business for me.’

Freddy's eyelid went down like the cover of a box.
 — 'Exactly; just so,' he said airily, putting his thumbs into his armholes. 'My case all over. I'm at my tutor's, you see, so please to remember that it isn't possible for you to have seen me.'

Glencore laughed cheerily. 'All right,' he said; 'you are quite safe with me—but what on earth are you up to?'

This question seemed prompted by the sight of a nondescript dogcart just led up to the door. 'Are you all by yourself here?'

'There's Harris, my old nurse, and Jim her husband—our butler he used to be—and Peggy. You know Peg, don't you?'

'Peg! No, I don't think I do.'

'I say,' exclaimed Freddy, 'isn't it a beastly shame the way they always try to shunt her? and she's just as good as anybody. Her father was my father's eldest son, only he married his tutor's daughter, and my lady set the governor on to cut up rough about it. So the poor chap got the kick-out, and then he died, and so did his wife, and a jolly good thing for me too, or I should have had to sing small. Only wait till I'm master, though, and if they try it on with Peggy then I'll let them know. She's older than I am, but all the same I'm her uncle, and—I say, you'll be her uncle too if you marry Adda, and you're going to, ain't you?'

Lord Glencore blushed furiously, and Freddy, taking silence for consent, added with a snort of supreme contempt, 'It's a jolly good thing for her I ain't you. Catch me marrying Adda! Oh yes, rather!'

Not desirous of pursuing this topic further, Lord Glencore put a question.

'You're not going to drive that,' he said, nodding towards the horse, a most vicious-looking screw, 'are you?'

'Why not? he's a real good one to go. Come in and see us start; it's capital fun. We'd a regular crowd round us yesterday. Anyone else but Peg would have been frightened to death.'

Incited by curiosity Lord Glencore obeyed Freddy's invitation.

'We keep all the front well shut,' said Freddy as he marshalled the way to a den at the far end of the narrow hall. Passing the stairs he gave vent to a shrill whistle, answered by a similar one which might have been taken as its echo.

'Ain't you ready?' was piped up from below.

'Coming,' answered a girl's voice, and at the same instant with the word down the flight of stairs, flop on the mat, came a figure which, through the cloud of dust sent up, Lord Glencore surmised must be Peggy.

'I'm so sorry. I thought it was only Freddy—I—' and then, better able to see who stood there, she gave vent to an agonised 'Oh, Lord Glencore!' and seemed unable to say more.

Freddy, who was enjoying her confusion to the full, here burst in with, 'Don't mind him; he's square enough, ain't you?'

'Certainly I am;' and then, turning to Peggy, he said, 'I've never had the pleasure of seeing you here, have I?'

'No.'

'But you've seen *him*, haven't you, Peg? And once don't you remember when the door opened and I scuttled off and your frock caught and you tumbled down? Oh, I say, what a game! It was a shaver we weren't caught that time.'

Poor Peggy's face was like a beetroot.

'There wasn't anything to see,' she said to Lord Glencore reassuringly; 'it really wasn't for that we looked, but I—I was so curious to know what you were like;' and she gesticulated violently to Freddy behind Lord Glencore's back.

'What's the harm?' responded the young gentleman expostulatively. 'You'd do the same if you were packed off into a cock-loft of a garret, wouldn't you? That's what they do with her—stick her anywhere out of the way.'

'No, Freddy, no,' Lord Glencore from out the corner of his eye saw her say, and hoping to change the conversation he said—

'I'm afraid I'm making you lose the best of the day. I came in to see you start.' Perhaps Peggy fathomed his kind effort, for she looked at him fairly for the first time.

'Yes?' and she gave him a little shy smile, 'did you?'

'It's very pleasant, a drive out of town now. Where are you going?'

'To Richmond Park,' answered the irrepressible Freddy; 'would you like to go too? We'll take you: there's heaps of room behind. Why—why shouldn't he?' This was evidently in answer to more pantomime from Peggy.

'You don't want me—would rather I didn't go?'

Lord Glencore had turned suddenly round and was asking this question of the young girl.

'Oh, no; it isn't that, only I'm afraid——' and here Peggy stopped and blushed furiously. For a wonder Glencore did not catch the complaint. Quite persuasively he said, 'But do let me; it's what I should so enjoy.'

There was an instant's pause, and then they all began laughing; and good fellowship being thus established, some twenty minutes

later the three, Lord Glencore behind, Freddy driving, and Peggy by his side, were on the road to Richmond.

III.

It might be tedious to retail all the folly that fell from the lips of this trio as under Freddy's guidance they pursued their way. Their united years did not make up the sober age of sixty, and they had the spirits of schoolboys out for a holiday. Lord Glencore had never felt so much at his ease before; none of those who in society knew him would have recognised him as the same shy individual. The hours flew like minutes. It was five o'clock when they thought it three; and then to have looked at the time would not have occurred to anybody, only that Peggy, heaving a tremendous sigh, had supposed it would soon be time to think of returning home.

The horse, that was so good at going, we have omitted to state, had at a certain small hostelry, 'Goat and Compass' by name, shown signs of rebellion. Stir from that door he would not, and Lord Glencore, to cut short the difficulty, had proposed that they should leave the brute there to get a feed, while they took a stroll in the park.

Returning from this walk they passed the 'Star and Garter.'

'I say, a dinner in there wouldn't be half bad fun,' said Freddy.

'Oh, I don't think so,' replied Glencore.

'Why, have you ever been there?'

'Yes, I dined there twice this season with Lady Jane and your sister.'

And a chill ran through the young man as he recalled the dreariness of those solemn ordeals.

'Oh!' said Freddy, drawing in his back as if about to succumb, while Peggy burst out laughing.

A bright inspiration came suddenly to Glencore.

'Why shouldn't we stop here now,' he said, 'have dinner, and go home after?'

Freddy and Peggy came to a sudden standstill, absolutely dumb with the brilliancy of the proposition.

'That's what we'll do,' continued the enthusiastic Glencore; and he made as if to turn in at the door, but Peggy stopped him.

'I don't think we can,' and she looked at Freddy significantly.

'No,' came the answer, a trifle crestfallen. 'I expect they wouldn't stand tick in there,' was added by way of explanation.

'That isn't of any consequence to you,' exclaimed Glencore. 'It's as my guests I invite you. Think how often your mother has entertained me.'

'Oh, I'm not proud,' laughed the delighted Freddy. 'Isn't this first-rate, Peg? Come on.'

But Peggy still hesitated.

'I don't know whether I ought—whether it's quite right with *you*,' and though her face was turned to both, her eyes were fixed on Glencore.

'And I your uncle that is,' exclaimed Freddy, 'and he going to be. Shut up, do.'

And, considering this speech to be conclusive, Freddy cut short further discussion by at once turning into the hotel.

IV.

WELL, if any dinner ever was a success, that one was. What they had, or how the courses came, not one of them knew, but, to quote Freddy, everything was A 1, and plenty of fizz with it. Undoubtedly the fizz set all their tongues running faster than before. Gradually on Freddy it began to have a slightly composing effect, so that, the dogcart having been sent for and brought to the door, he magnanimously insisted that going home he would sit behind and leave the ribbons to be handled by Glencore.

The clock struck nine before they were fairly off, and then, Peggy exclaiming at the lateness of the hour, Glencore said:

'But it won't matter much, will it?'

'No,' said Peggy a trifle bitterly. 'Harris knows I'll look after Freddy, and there's no one to bother about what becomes of me.'

'You have neither father nor mother, have you?'

Glencore put the question gently, and, not waiting for her answer, went on to tell her that he too had lost his parents when a child, and was, like her, lonely, with no one to care for him.

'Yes,' she said, 'but you're a man with lots of money, and I'm poor and dependent; and then it's horrid to be a girl. Ever since I can remember I've heard nothing else but all I owe to everybody, as if it was my fault that I owe anything to them. I can't help having been born. Here I am, and until I die here I

must stay. Not dependent, though. I've only waited to be taught something. I've had to owe that much to grandmamma.'

Lord Glencore remained silent, and, thinking that probably her troubles were of no interest to him, Peggy changed the subject. Directing his attention to Freddy, now silently sleeping, she managed to prop the lad up into a more comfortable position, and assented to Lord Glencore's remark that he did not seem like the rest of the family.

Then silence fell on them, and for a time not a word was spoken. Suddenly, as if from out of what she was thinking, Peggy said abruptly:

'Are you very much in love with Adda?'

'I! I'm not in love with her at all.'

'But you're going to marry her?'

'Who says I am?'

'Why, everybody; and grandmamma, I know, means you to.'

'I see, and that makes you think it quite certain?'

Peggy laughed contemptuously. 'It wouldn't make it certain with me,' she said, 'but men seem different; what she chooses they do. Oh, I haven't patience to think of it,' and the great brown eyes she turned on Glencore sparkled indignantly. 'Why, do you think, unless I loved somebody dearly, I'd marry him to please *grandmamma*? *Never!* she knows that as well as I do. She may ill-treat me, but she can't make me do what I won't; I'd die rather. Shall I tell you what I mean to do?'—she was speaking very fast and excitedly—'I mean to run away. You'll promise me not to tell anyone, won't you? I mean to go very soon now—if I can, before they come home. Other girls earn their own livings, so why shouldn't I? I'm not stupid, and I'm awfully strong.'

'But where will you go?'

'Oh, I know, but that I don't mean to tell. Perhaps I oughtn't to have said a word about it to you, but it slipped out, and you won't betray me, will you? most of all, don't breathe a word to Adda; she hates me, and—well, there's no use disguising it—I hate her. When you're married to her—'

'Which I never shall be,' interrupted Lord Glencore decidedly. Peggy faced round and looked her surprise at him.

'Don't look like that at me,' he said hastily; 'I mean what I say.'

'You do? Oh, I am awfully sorry.'

'For her or for me?'

'I don't think I was thinking of either of you. It was for myself—there's so few ever care to be kind to me.'

'And you think I should be?'

Peggy didn't trust herself to speak, but her head nodded assent.

'Let me tell a secret to you, Peggy'—he quite unconsciously called her by her name. 'Do you know that I mean to run away too?'

'You!'

'Yes; only I want somebody to run away with me. Can you guess who?'

'No.'

'Somebody I've seen to-day.'

'To-day!'

The eyes of each looked into the other's questioningly.

'Can't you guess who?'

Lord Glencore's voice came tremulously.

'Oh, you know,' he said, 'I see you do.'

'Me!' Peggy spoke the word breathlessly.

'Yes, *you*. You will go, won't you? You've no one to care for you, and I have nobody to care for me. Why shouldn't we care for each other? I'd try and make you happy, and I'd certainly be good to you, and in time you might get to—well, to like me, you know.'

'In time! why, I like you now.'

'You do? Oh, Peggy!'

'I say! what's up with you two?' It was Freddy speaking—Freddy, whose very existence they had forgotten, but who, in common with all sleepers, awoke at the very moment he was not wanted to.

'What do you think?' said Glencore in a whisper; 'had we better tell him?'

'Yes,' said Peggy; 'up to now my only friend has been Freddy.'

So Freddy, thoroughly wide awake now, was desired to lean forward, and between them the two conveyed what it was their intention to do.

'I say, what a chouse for Adda!' roared Freddy delightedly; 'but here, you know you'll have to marry Peggy.'

'Certainly; of course that's what we mean to do.'

'Do we?' said Peggy, 'oh my! why, I never thought of that!'

'Didn't you?' said Freddy, assuming the air of a Mentor, 'but I did though. You must be Lady Glencore before I see the last of you.'

'But, Freddy, think of grandmamma; you would get into the most awful trouble. No, it would never do.'

'Stuff and rubbish!' and Freddy snapped his fingers; 'what, I should like to know, can a couple of women do? Besides, I'm not going to blab on myself—never fear. How can I help it if, while I'm ruralising with my tutor, you choose to bolt with Glencore?'

V.

ARRIVED at Thorndean, happy and unsuspecting, Lady Jane and her daughter waited for Lord Glencore in vain. Even to 'dear Lady Somerton' not a line had come from him. As everyone said, it was so strange, so incomprehensible. 'You don't think anything could have happened to him, Lady Jane?'

With a brave spirit worthy of a better woman, Lady Jane answered that she did not feel anxious in the least. Lord Glencore had spoken to her of having several most important things to settle, and naturally at times such as these—Lady Jane was forced into a little vagueness of speech—a thousand things cropped up which one had never dreamed of before. Still her heart began to have misgivings, and her courage to sink a little lower, when all was revived by a paragraph in one of the papers informing all whom it did not concern that Messrs. Bullion & Gold had been entrusted with the family jewels by Lord Glencore with the view of ascertaining which had best be reset to suit their future lovely owner.

'Adda!' Lady Jane signalled to her daughter to follow her, and in their own room she pointed out the notice.

'Mother! oh, I am so glad. I kept on thinking of those jewels. Everybody says the diamonds are more than lovely.'

'What a droll creature though!' exclaimed Lady Jane, 'without saying a word to *you*! I wonder whether he fancies we are getting the trousseau ready.'

'I shan't do that; it's so unlucky. I wish he would settle it though. I want it settled now. Couldn't you write, mamma?'

'My dear, I have written.'

'And had no answer?'

'Not a line. Colonel Gossett called, as he was asked, at the house in town, and was told that Lord Glencore was away, his address not known, nor when he would return.'

'Extraordinary!'

'It is, but we must remember he is a very extraordinary young man.'

'I don't want reminding of that,' and Adda sighed lugubriously, 'if he wasn't an earl.'

'No, no, no, dear. Never mind. Things of that sort are better not said even to me. In this world we must not expect to have everything, you know; and women are spared a great deal by not being too infatuated with the man they are going to marry.'

'Only this is such an awkward position to be placed in. I don't mind so much here, but we are due at the Fallowfields on Tuesday, and if he does not turn up there, what then?'

'Oh, I don't mean to wait longer. I shall go to town myself—that is, if we don't hear—and question his majordomo. If there is anything to find out, you may safely trust to me.'

'It's more than a fortnight now,' said Adda discontentedly.

Lady Jane sighed. 'There seems to be nothing else for me than worry.'

'What more?'

'Oh, well, I didn't want to bother you, and if everything else was going right, I shouldn't let this trouble me. It's a letter I had from Harris. She says that Peggy, if you please, has chosen to run away from home. Harris hopes I won't worry myself, or blame her, as the young lady has had it in her mind for some time. That's gratitude, you know—after all I've done for her.'

'I'm sure I should let her be. She'll never come to any good end, that girl. Haven't I always said so?'

'All I hope is, she'll take another name; ours is such a very peculiar one.'

'And if Glencore came to know, it might be very unpleasant for me.'

'Oh, that need in no way give you any trouble. Be very certain there is some one objectionable in every family. Of course some enquiries will have to be made, but, beyond telling Harris to keep the thing quiet, I can't at present take any steps in the matter.'

'Very likely she's back again by this time.'

'I shouldn't wonder,' said Lady Jane absently; and then, after a moment's pause, she added, 'I've been thinking. Suppose before we go to the Fallowfields I was to write to them, and manage to bring in something about whether they expected Glencore. It's just possible that they may have heard from him.'

Adda considered this an excellent idea, and Lady Jane put it

at once into execution, managing to insert a question of apparently burning interest which needed an immediate reply.

The reply came, and in a postscript the writer was so sorry that Lord Glencore was prevented coming to them, fearing it might be a disappointment to Adda.

'My dear,' said Lady Jane, 'I must go to town. I dare say Lady Somerton will guess why, although I shall invent some reason to give her. I fear I was indiscreet in losing sight of this young man. But don't despair; nothing is beyond remedy. If I can only find out where he is, rest assured this will never happen again.'

'I always thought you were too sanguine,' said Adda, ready to vent her displeasure on everybody. 'I don't believe he ever wanted to marry me, only you would have it he did.'

Lady Jane went to London, was absent a week, and then returned a sadder but not a wiser woman. Not a trace could she find of Glencore, not a word had she heard of him.

'And Peggy?' said Adda, 'what about her?'

'Not a syllable. She had been gone a week and more before Harris wrote to me. It seems, however, a planned thing. She had had it in her mind at least a year.'

'I wonder,' said Adda, 'will he ever turn up again?' Her thoughts had reverted to Lord Glencore.

'Of course he will,' said Lady Jane decidedly; 'and we must profit by the lesson we have learnt from him. Now, my dear, go off and tell Stevens to come to me. I have a trying ordeal before me to answer all the questions that the people here will put. I heard them in fits of laughter over their afternoon tea. I begged Lady Somerton to excuse me until dinner. I really didn't feel as if I could face them then. Ah, Adda,' and Lady Jane nodded her head mournfully, 'perhaps some day, when you have daughters of your own, you may know. Talk of martyrs! You have only to look at mothers.'

That evening, when Lady Jane joined the guests assembled in the drawing-room, she noticed that everyone looked at her with an air of enquiry. It had been agreed at the request of the hostess that not a word on a subject uppermost in the minds of all of them should be mentioned until after dinner. Poor Lady Jane, sitting in a fool's paradise, actually fancied the object of her absence had lost its interest to everybody. Alas! a mine was about to explode, and Lady Somerton, nettled at the want of confidence shown, was the one to set the match. Advancing to

the comfortable armchair in which, the ladies having returned to the drawing-room, her smiling guest was reclining, she said:

‘Of course, dear Lady Jane, you have seen the announcement in the *Times* of to-day?’

‘No, indeed; I waited until I got here to look at the paper,’ and she stretched out her hand for it languidly. ‘Anything of interest?’

‘To you, yes, of great interest, I should say. Listen. “On the 12th of September, at St. Simon’s Church, Battlesea, Peggy, only child of the late Wynford Magnus, Esq., to Harold William, tenth Earl of Glencore.”’

Adda gave a bound.

‘Peggy!’ she shrieked. ‘Mother! Oh!’

But Lady Jane interrupted her. With a supreme effort the modern martyr rose to the occasion.

‘Be calm, dear child,’ she said. ‘See what your coldness has driven him to. However, poor fellow, in spite of his disappointment, he was determined, it seems, to marry one of the family.’

LOUISA PARR.

Something about Snakes.

IN writing about snakes an apology must be offered for beginning with what may seem to be a boastful statement; but it is unavoidable, as it is my chief justification for putting pen to paper.

Therefore it must be avowed that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, the snakes have never had a worse enemy than they have found in me, and it came to pass in this way. In the year 1856-7, being one of the Secretaries to the Government of Bengal, I obtained the consent of the Lieutenant-Governor, Sir Frederick Halliday, to the issue of an order authorising the payment of a reward of sixpence for every poisonous snake whose dead body should be produced before a district magistrate in Bengal. This was the beginning of the campaign against snakes in India, and my hand was responsible for it. It was subsequently backed up by the influence of Sir Joseph Fayrer, the greatest living authority on snakes. From that day forth, with occasional intermissions, the system of giving rewards has spread from province to province, until the total number of venomous snakes killed throughout British India in 1886 exceeded four hundred thousand. If it be admitted that, during the last thirty years, the average number of poisonous snakes killed has amounted to only one hundred thousand per annum, a child can calculate how many million snakes have to denounce me as the originator of the mischief and crusade against them.

Why, it may be asked, was such wrath against snakes kindled in me? The explanation is peculiar, and may not be the true one, but it happened that when I was a very small child, my mother's brother, the Rev. Matthew Arnold,¹ was bitten on the ankle by a viper at Slatwoods, in the Isle of Wight, and the story went that his life was in great danger, the whole of his body turning black

¹ Brother of Dr. Arnold.

gradually from the feet upwards, until the blackness came as high as his heart, when it stopped and began to abate, until it gradually disappeared as the virulence of the poison wore out. This story made a grave impression on the juvenile minds of myself and my brothers. Not long afterwards we were taken to stay with an aunt at Eaglehurst, in Hampshire, and somewhere down on the beach, towards Calshot Castle, I found a snake lying on the grass, which, being an '*animosus infans*,' I picked up and brought to our nurse. Luckily for me the snake was dead, but according to the fashion of those days I was afterwards soundly flogged, to teach me not to play with snakes again. From either of these causes it may have come to pass that an antipathy to snakes was engendered in my heart.

My cousin Frank Buckland, with whom I was for some time at school as a boy, had a fondness for keeping snakes in his pockets, which was not shared by his schoolfellows, including me. However this may have been, I have little recollection of anything about snakes at that time, except that when I was a boy at Eton there was a large snake exhibited one year at Windsor fair, which pleased our juvenile fancy, as we were glad to see a snake as described by Virgil *positis novus exuviiis*, and we were delighted to buy, for a very fancy price, a piece of the old skin that it had shed. The next time that I met a snake the meeting was bad for the snake. A friend was driving me in his buggy in the suburbs of Calcutta with a fast-trotting horse, when a large snake tried to cross the road in front of us. But the horse, not seeing or not heeding it, trotted on, and a wheel of the buggy cut the snake in half. We pulled up to examine the remains, and it turned out to be only a large but harmless water-snake.

It is hardly credible how long a time a man may live in India without seeing snakes in his house, unless he looks about diligently for them. Of course there is more chance of seeing them out of doors, and especially out snipe-shooting, as the snake is an amphibious sort of creature, with a special appetite for a juicy young frog, whose home, not always a very happy one, is in the rice-fields. What with the long-legged birds of the crane species that stalk through the water, and the snakes who glide about in the mud, or lie on the little earthen ridges which divide the rice-fields for irrigation purposes, the frogs have a bad time of it. One afternoon I was walking along one of the earthen ridges between the rice-fields, looking for snipe on either side of me, when a few yards in front of me there reared up three cobras, facing

me with hoods erect, and evidently 'meaning venom.' I fired a charge of snipe-shot into them, and there was a great confusion of heads and tails and bits of bodies, so that it would have been hard to put a whole snake together again. This gave me a useful lesson to keep a good look-out. One day I was out shooting with a friend who trod on a snake, which promptly curled round his leg and tried to bite through his gaiter. His gaiter was perfectly snake-proof, but he did not think of that, and his efforts to shoot the snake without hitting his own leg were so ludicrous that it was hardly possible not to laugh, until we could hit the snake on the head with a loading-rod and make it quit my friend's leg.

Once we were spending a holiday at a little bungalow at the seaside, to which we used to go occasionally for change of air, and sea-bathing if the tide permitted it. We were walking along the sandy beach, when we saw a large cobra, about five feet long, with a bird in its mouth, making off through some light bushes, where it had probably seized the bird, though it had not had time to swallow it. We very soon disabled the snake by a blow on the back, but as it was by no means dead we secured it with a small rope, and dragged it into the portico of the bungalow for the sake of trying experiments with it. We sent for one of the numerous village dogs called pariahs, but the snake would not look at the dog. A fowl was then brought and placed, with its legs tied, near the snake's head. The snake revived a little, and made a dart at the fowl, but the bird evaded it, and struggling to its feet it gave the cobra a fierce peck on the head, which quite decided the battle. The fact was that the snake was too much injured by the blow on the spine that had disabled it; and, moreover, it had probably spent its freshness and most deadly venom in killing the small bird which it had seized before we saw it. Many years afterwards I saw a cobra bite a fowl, and turned to look at my watch to see how long it would be before the poison took effect. As I looked back again towards the fowl it fell down quite dead, within thirty seconds from the time it was bitten. This occurred in the house of a friend who had engaged an itinerant snake-charmer to exhibit snakes to a party of guests. Several cobras, deprived of their poisonous fangs, had been exhibited in the usual manner, when the snake-charmer stated that he had with him a snake of which the poisonous fangs were intact, and he offered to show it. He dealt with it very carefully with a forked stick in producing it from a basket, and he was equally

cautious when he placed the fowl near enough to the snake to be bitten by it. What the result of the bite was to the fowl has been already told. There can be little doubt that if this cobra had managed to bite its keeper or any of the spectators, with its fangs fully charged with fresh venom, it would have been almost if not quite impossible to save their life.

It is always expedient in India to have a dog or a cat or a mungoose (a sort of ichneumon) about the house to keep away snakes, or to draw attention to them when they are crawling about. My wife's dog probably saved her life by barking at two snakes which had got into her dressing-room. A cat with kittens once drew my attention, by her extraordinary antics, to a large cobra, which she was trying to keep away from her young ones. The mungoose is the professional enemy of the snake, and goes for him at once to kill him, and perhaps to eat him. There is no valid foundation for the belief that the mungoose has recourse to an antidote to protect itself against a snake's venom. The mungoose relies on his own agility and sharp teeth, and on the coarse hair of his skin, which will avert most snake-bites. But if the snake gets well home, so as to lodge his poison in the mungoose's skin, that mungoose will surely die. It is not dissimilar to the case of the common village pigs in India, which are well known as scavengers and carrion-eaters. They will kill and eat any snake that comes in their way, and the hide of their hard and hairy bodies and legs is almost snake-proof. But if a cobra bites a pig on a soft place, so as to plant his poison under the skin, that pig will surely die.

The python, or boa-constrictor, is comparatively common in Bengal, and sometimes grows to a great size. The first one that I saw was said to be twenty-four feet long, but it had been dead for several days, and the stench from it was longer than the street in which it was being exhibited to a crowd of admiring natives, and I could not venture to measure it. I saw another, which was said to be twenty-one feet long, being carried dead through the street of Dacca, but was unable to stop to measure it for myself. An officer, whose veracity I did not mistrust, told me he had found one in Cachar twenty-five feet long, which had committed suicide by swallowing a buck hog-deer, of which the horns injured and cut through the intestines of the snake before the gastric juices could soften the horns. There was a plentiful supply of pythons at the Zoological Gardens in Calcutta. One large one, which measured nearly eighteen feet, sat most patiently for more than a month over a

batch of its eggs, and it was hoped that her perseverance and motherly affection would be rewarded by a young brood. But for some unknown reason the eggs were all addled. During her long incubation the mother snake was never seen to quit her eggs; and she would take no kind of food, although rats and chickens were offered to her from day to day.

It is not every one who has seen a python take a meal. It is usually averse to dead food; but it is very partial to a live rabbit, or a chicken, or a guinea-pig, or by preference a rat. The python seems to know that the rat will try to escape, and he gives it no time or quarter. With a rapidity that can hardly be conceived, he seizes the rat with his mouth, and the fatal coil passes round the creature, squeezing all life out of it, and reducing the body to the form of an elongated sausage, which the snake lubricates with its own slime and swallows entire. If a fowl is put into a python's cage, the snake sometimes seems to take no notice, and the frightened bird, finding that no harm comes to it, begins to ruffle its feathers and to peck about, occasionally trying its beak on the snake's skin. But after a while the end of the python's tail may be seen to quiver with a strange emotion, whilst the small black beady eye is fixed upon the fowl. Suddenly there is a convulsion. The snake has moved and the fowl has disappeared, and can only be discovered by the end of a feather or two protruding from the coils in the python's neck which have crushed the bird's life out. In its natural state the python will catch a deer or a wild pig, and crush it in the powerful coils of its neck. There is a well-authenticated story of a large python having caught two wild sucking pigs simultaneously, crushing both with the same coil of its neck. In the case of the python mentioned above, which was killed by the horns of the buck that it had swallowed, the snake must have been able to break all the bones of the body, but the stag's horns were probably too sharp and pointed to be easily crushed, and the snake rashly took the chance of digesting them in its stomach. No stories of a python killing a man ever came to my knowledge, but one of the keepers at the Calcutta Zoological Gardens had his arm much injured one morning by a python coiling itself on it and squeezing it severely before the man could be rescued.

It has been mentioned that large rewards are paid throughout India for killing venomous snakes. The actual number of snakes for which rewards were paid in 1886 was 417,596, and the sum paid was 25,360 rs., which is little more than a penny each in the depreciated silver currency. These rewards are almost invariably

paid, or ought to be paid, by the English magistrates themselves, after examining the dead snakes. Numerous attempts are made to pass off harmless snakes as poisonous snakes ; and a highly educated native official will rarely condescend to allow a dead snake to come too closely between the wind and his nobility, to enable him to distinguish between the poisonous and the non-poisonous snakes. If the rewards were not paid by an English officer, a considerable portion of them would probably be intercepted by unscrupulous native subordinates before they reached the man who killed the snake.

When the Duke of Argyll was Secretary of State for India, he, as a student of natural history, took a special interest in the question of killing poisonous snakes. And there came to him one day at the India Office the cunning inventor of a machine called an asphyxiator, by which it was easily demonstrated that the snakes could be killed in large numbers in the holes in which they dwell in India. It was not difficult to show to his Grace that when the asphyxiator was applied to a rabbit-hole the rabbit must either bolt or be suffocated. The snake would be treated in the same way as a rabbit. So the duke ordered some twenty asphyxiators, and sent them out to different parts of India. It happened that I was employed near Calcutta, and the Government of Bengal were pleased to order me to make a trial of the consignment of asphyxiators, which they regarded as so many white elephants. The asphyxiators were unpacked, and the instructions which accompanied them were read. There was a sort of fire-box in which a pestilently smelling paper was to be burnt. There was a wheel to be turned, so as to send the smoke from the burning paper through a funnel into a long nozzle which was to be inserted into the snake's hole. This, it will be seen, required the services of two men, one to keep up the fire and turn the wheel, and the other to direct and hold the nozzle-pipe. It was also requisite that a third man should stand by with a stick, to kill the snake bolting from its hole. We turned out with the apparatus properly manned, lighted the fire to get up smoke, and applied the nozzle to a hole in a bank near the stable, which was supposed to hold a snake. The smoke was injected, and out there bolted a terrified rat. The man with the stick struck at the rat and broke the nozzle-pipe. The man at the nozzle-pipe jumped back against the man who was turning the wheel, and in their fright they both tumbled down. The rat escaped, but if it had been a snake instead of a rat it is very probable that one of the three operators might have been bitten. The men lost confidence in the machine,

and declined to work it. It was taken indoors, and put into an anteroom, where the native night-watchman usually took up his quarters. One cold night the watchman closed the doors of the room and lit a quantity of the medicated paper to warm himself. In the morning a well-asphyxiated watchman was found, but luckily he was brought round with deluges of cold water. This, however, was the end of the official career of the Duke of Argyll's snake-asphyxiator in Bengal.

Although most people have a natural aversion to snakes, and would on no account touch them, there are some persons who are accustomed to handle snakes (*tractare serpentes*), and will pick up a wild poisonous snake from the ground with impunity. George Borrow, the author of 'The Gypsies in Spain,' had this faculty; and I knew two officers, one of whom was a captain in a Scotch regiment, whilst his brother was the doctor, who said that this faculty of handling snakes had been born in them. In a work published not long ago by Mr. F. B. Simson, a retired Indian civilian, he gives the following prescription for catching cobras: 'When you come upon your cobra, make him rear up and expand his hood. He generally does this quickly enough; but should he delay, whistle to him, imitating the snake-charmers. He will then certainly raise his head. Then with a small cane or stick, or the ramrod of a gun, gently press his head to the ground. The snake will not object; he seems rather to like it. When you press his head lightly to the ground with the stick in your left hand, you should seize the snake firmly with your right, close behind the head, holding his neck rather tightly; then let go the stick and catch hold of the tail. The snake is powerless, and you can do what you like with it. You should have an earthen pot brought and let the snake pass into it, as snakes will always go into any dark place.' On the whole this prescription does not seem inviting. I have never tried it, and should hardly care to see any one try it.

Mr. Simson says that he had an elephant-driver, or *mahout*, who was a great snake-catcher and very reckless. He writes thus: 'I never saw him press down the snake with a rod such as I have described, but he caught numbers of snakes of all sorts, and sent them alive to his house. His movements were so rapid, and generally in jungle and with his back to me, that I never made out exactly why he did not get bit. He used to jump off his elephant, leaving the animal in my guidance: in a moment afterwards he had the snake's neck in his hand. He said that he caught them

by their tails, swung them under his arm, and held them there, whilst he slipped his hand up to the back of the head. He then gave the snake some of his clothing to amuse itself with, and on which to expend its venom. He then wrapped the reptiles up in a loose cloth and took very little trouble with them. I have seen him catch snakes scores of times, but I rather discouraged him, as I did not like the idea of having live venomous snakes at large, or even in earthen pots or boxes. At the same time he received good prices for his snakes.'

Some people who are used to handle snakes seem to lose all feeling of apprehension regarding them. Sir Joseph Fayrer, whose work styled '*Thanatophidia*' contains the most perfect coloured plates and descriptions of the principal venomous snakes, had no fear of them. But he was very nearly bitten one day. He and a friend were busy examining the peculiar anatomy of a portion of a cobra's tail. The cobra was in a box, and a native assistant was supposed to be holding down the lid of the box so as to allow only the tail to protrude. Somehow the native became careless, and he relaxed his hold on the lid, so that the cobra suddenly put out its head to see what Sir Joseph Fayrer was doing with its tail. Luckily it was more pleased than offended at the liberties which were being taken with its tail, but it was unpleasant for Sir Joseph Fayrer to find his face almost touching the cobra's mouth. Dr. Richards was another officer who assisted Sir Joseph Fayrer in his experiments with snakes. Dr. Richards came one day to see a lady patient at my house. He arrived in a palanquin which was put down in the portico. He went to the lady's room and paid her a brief visit; and when he came out of the room he went to the palanquin and brought out a large cobra which he had brought over to show me, in order to prove by experiments in my presence that a particular kind of wood, which a native fakeer declared to be an antidote to snake-poison, was of no value. It is unnecessary to recapitulate the experiments, but his familiarity with the deadly snake was quite alarming. I could not help wondering what his lady patient would have said if she had known that he had brought a snake with him to the house, for she was terribly nervous about snakes.

The snake-house in the Zoological Gardens in the Regent's Park is a most perfectly designed building for keeping the snakes in health, and for exhibiting them to the public. The late King of Oude had built a snakery in the gardens of his palace at Garden Reach, near Calcutta. It was an oblong pit about thirty feet long

by twenty feet broad, the walls being about twelve feet high, and perfectly smooth, so that a snake could not climb up. In the centre of the pit there was a large block of rough masonry, perforated so that it was as full of holes as a sponge. In this honey-combed block the snakes dwelt; and when the sun shone brightly they came out to bask or to feed. His Majesty used to have live frogs put into the pit, and amused himself by seeing the hungry snakes catch the frogs. When a large snake catches a small frog, it is all over in an instant; but if a smallish snake catches a largish frog, so that he cannot swallow it at once, the frog's cries are piteous to hear. Again and again I have heard them whilst out shooting, and have gone to the bush or tuft of grass from which the piercing cries came—sometimes in time, sometimes too late to save poor froggy, though the snake generally got shot. As a final story let me tell how a frog has been seen to turn the tables on the snake. Two gentlemen in Cachar some years ago saw a small snake seize a small frog and attempt to swallow it. But suddenly a large frog jumped forward, seized the snake's tail, and began to swallow the snake. How the affair might have ended cannot be told, because my friends imprudently drew near to watch the combat, when the frogs and the snake took alarm, and the big frog disgorged the snake's tail, and the snake released the little frog, and they all scuttled off. But the tale is perfectly true, and both the gentlemen who saw it are still alive; and I only regret that it was not my good luck to see the affair with my own eyes.

C. T. BUCKLAND, F.Z.S.

Uncle Pierce.

BY CHARLES BLATHERWICK.

CHAPTER VII.

OLD PAUL APPEARS.

CAPTAIN HARLEIGH was right. Miss Carrie *did* fight shy of me. Regularly every day I went to the house, but never once got inside it. Paul's wife, tall, rigid, and taciturn, blocked the entrance, shot out her excuse through the half-opened door, then banged it in my face.

I wrote. I reminded her of Bordeaux, told her to stifle this ill will of hers, and let me help them in their present trouble. All that mortal man could say I said, but got never so much as a scrap in reply. Not very encouraging! but it did *one* thing: it gave me a capital excuse for stopping at Broxford, and Broxford was one of the sweetest pastoral spots in the south of England.

'No place like it, sir,' the old gentleman sang out. 'Best climate in the world. Why, your uncle's poor wife used to swear by it. So do I, after Dresden. I'll show you round, and you shall judge for yourself.'

He was one of those men the grasp of whose honest hand puts you right with the world, knocks all nonsense out of your head, and shows you what good things can be had for the seeking. I was at his house every day and all day. A real English home, cosy, warm, and peaceful. The sitting rooms, crammed full of souvenirs of his Eastern cruises, all opened on to the garden, and the garden had been made an earthly paradise by Lettie. Uncommonly grateful to me was it after my long months of helter-skelter. No wonder I lingered there. I was trotted here, there, and everywhere, shown the peeps from the hills with the blue Solent in the distance, taken to Posbrooke and made a member of the tennis club, and altogether had a fine time of it.

So the days passed. Passed? They flew! and Carrie made

no sign. Every day, though, I caught a little more of the village gossip about her and her father. The tradesmen were crying out for their money. Why should they be treated worse than their Southampton neighbours? Where was that insurance money that was to come at Mrs. Danning's death? Miss Carrie too! Who was she to give herself these airs? What did she mean by shutting herself up and never having so much as a civil word for anybody?

All this pother was a godsend to me. It not only kept me at Broxford, but it gave me a subject on which Lettie and I could be confidential. I had come to help the Dannings, and help them I would if I could, but my real business there—ay! and the one object of my life now—was to win her. She had flown out of my reach, though, and seemed so far above me that though we propounded and planned dozens of schemes in behalf of these unfortunate Dannings, I never could pluck up courage to speak of what was uppermost in my mind. True, we were not strangers; but, alas! the years that had passed since we met at Druffie had made a gulf across which the boy and girl friendship could not be renewed.

After a few days, though, on the strength of this old friendship, Lettie was allowed to ride with me. There was no lack of a good nag either, for Mr. Penney being a well-to-do horsey man with a snug farm on the hillside where he reared hunters and enjoyed an off day occasionally, you could, as Uncle Pierce said, 'take your pick from his stables.'

Many a spin had we across the hard sands at the Creek. From there I got my first sight of Captain Pierce's craft, well named the *Folly*. A more uncomfortable boat for pleasuring could not have been invented. A rusty old trading schooner, nothing more. She was being patched up, and I fancied I saw old Paul working away on board. I did not care to renew my acquaintance with him though, notwithstanding that Lettie told me she had won the old curmudgeon's heart by giving him flowers for his wind-blown garden.

In those happy summer days what cared I for Miss Carrie and her grumpiness? Lettie though, I could see plainly enough, was upset by it. Mill House had been shut to her ever since my arrival. She had called, she had written, and been put off with the everlasting excuse of her father's health.

Carrie was seen by nobody.

One evening, though, as we rowed past her garden, we caught sight of her sombre figure walking in front of the old wistaria. I never offered to stop, and rowed on to the upper meadows. Then said Lettie:

'Somebody should really do something for her. No wonder she is in everybody's mouth. The Crawford girls declare she is going mad. Can nothing be done?'

'Yes, we could quiet the tradesfolk, but that would offend her.'

'Supposing it did. It might save something worse. How can she be offended, though, when she knows you came all this way to help her?'

'But I did not come altogether for that, Lettie! Remember, I missed you at Dresden.'

'We had started after her and her father.'

'I know. I wanted to see whether you had forgotten Drufflie altogether.'

'Forgotten Drufflie! no, indeed! Did you hear that Carrie got into trouble abroad for singing old Maisie's song?'

'I heard something about it. I can never forget Drufflie, Lettie! I have the bunch of black feathers yet.'

Her eyes fell, and the colour jumped to her cheek, at the slight fervour that willy nilly would fit on to my last words.

'My father thinks of going again,' she said.

'I've half a mind then to give Mr. Fraser a hint and go too,' said I.

'It is to be hoped you won't have to wade in the icy loch after a castaway,' she said saucily.

'I should like to have the chance. I should like all those days to come over again. Do you remember dividing that bunch of feathers, Lettie?'

But the young lady shied at this. It was too point blank.

'The white mist is rising,' she said evasively. 'I think we had better turn.'

I hated this white mist that filled the valley every evening. Often had I watched it from the hillside, lying below me on the meadows like a white pall. Never did I hate it so much as then though, just at the very time when every fibre was burning with love for her, and when a little dallying among the sedges would have given me a chance of telling her so.

There it was, though. It gathered round us while she spoke, getting denser and denser as we neared Mill House again. There it had crept into the old garden, making it more uncanny than ever.

We were drifting slowly by, when suddenly Cariña's glorious voice broke on our ears. Lettie's eyes met mine, and without a word I ran the boat in behind the alders and listened.

She was singing Kücken's wild lament :

*The harp now is silent,
Unstrung is the bow.*

The top windows were open, and we heard every word and note distinctly. A creepy sort of scene it was too, for as the mist wound quicker and quicker about the tall hollyhocks and shrubs they took on fantastic half-human shapes, till it seemed as if she had conjured up a ghostly audience that was being swayed and moved by the power of her voice.

Lettie shuddered and drew her shawl closer about her when the song ceased, and we dropped down stream again. It was as still as death. Now and then we heard the splash of a big trout, but could see nothing. We managed to shoot the bridge safely though, and reached Willow Bank without any mishap.

There we found her father pacing up and down in front of the boathouse in a terrible pucker. His blue glasses glimmered through the fog, there was a foghorn in his hand and a yellow bandana round his ears.

'Come along! Come along!' he cried. 'I've something to tell you. Get out of this infernal fog first, though. Worst enemy you can have ashore or afloat. Look here, Henry, matters have come to a crisis in Mill Street. There's a fog wants clearing away there, and no mistake! Penney has just been up to tell me that Chinnery has called a meeting about your uncle's affairs, and the upshot of it is that they are going to set Saville the Southampton lawyer at him. He's to be sold up! Think of that! Did you ever hear the like? He and Carrie to be turned out of their home and sent on the tramp again.'

'We'll put a stop to that,' said I decisively.

'Of course! but who's to blame, I'd like to know? Who but Carrie? Upon my word it is enough to make one's blood boil!'

And hereupon he launched into such a blustering tirade against my unfortunate relatives, that no one in this world would have thought he was ready then and there to put his hand in his pocket for them.

'It is best to settle what is to be done, and do it,' said Lettie in a businesslike way.

'First and foremost to bring Mr. Chinnery to book,' said I.

'The sooner the better,' said Harleigh. 'Get off to the "Bugle" at once. It's market day. Everybody will be there. Chinnery will be showing off. He's the pest of the place! A spouter! A windbag! Fills his little body with big words and gives everyone

the benefit of 'em! Now's your time to tackle him. Off you go! but remember! you have to dine here to-morrow to meet old Joyce.'

'Remember, too, that you must go and see Carrie to-morrow,' Lettie added.

'Supposing she won't see me?'

'She must! she shall! I'll write and tell her you'll be there at twelve.'

I went off to the 'Bugle' and found a tremendous row going on outside. Old Paul of Bordeaux memory was the centre figure. Budd the butcher was his antagonist. Mr. Chinnery, with some of the lesser village lights, made up the crowd, and Landlord Penney—straw in mouth and hands in pockets—serenely viewed the altercation from his stone steps.

'Had to turn 'em out, sir,' he said, as I joined him; 'the old man got so obstreperous about this meeting. I'm glad you're going to take the business in hand.'

'Go home, Paul,' the butcher was saying. 'Go home, old man! We wish you no harm. The Captain may be your master, but that's no reason why we should be kept out of our money. We ask for fair play.'

'And our constitutional rights,' put in Chinnery.

'Bah!' cried old Paul, 'why the Captain could buy you all up, peddling shops and all, and feel it no more than I should in buying a penn'orth of baccy. He could put down gold for your copper.'

'We'd like to see the colour of it,' said Chinnery.

'I'd show you a queer sort of colour once I got you aboard my boat, Master Chinnery.'

'Your boat! Aha! you won't have her much longer. It's time she was got out of the way. She'll be realised with the rest of the estate.'

'You're a liar, Chinnery!' shouted the old man. 'She's mine, you cur hounds, paid for with my own money! Estate! Bah! I spit on you.'

Now Mr. Budd, in spite of his calling, was a mild easy-tempered man when not in his cups; but this last insult was too much for his British blood, warmed as it was with Mr. Penney's good ale, so an unexpected blow straight from his brawny shoulder sent old Paul sprawling on the ground. He was up in a jiffy, whipped out a formidable-looking knife, and if his arms had not been promptly pinioned and the knife snatched from him, Mr. Budd would have been served as he had served many a sheep. I jumped

down to prevent bloodshed ; but no sooner confronted the old man than he glared at me like a wild beast.

‘Oh ! it’s you, is it ?’ he gasped, after a pause. ‘It’s you that’s brought all this about ! It’s you that’s hounding on these curs. I know you. Your old Bordeaux game, eh ! We’ve got to the bottom of it now ! Let loose, Budd. Let loose, man ! I’ve done with you and the rest. You’re a pack of hungry curs waiting for your meat. That’s all. But as for this mister, this prying, sneaking ——’

‘Hold your drunken tongue !’ said Budd with a shake.

‘Let him alone, Budd, and give me his knife,’ said I. ‘I’m a friend of Captain Danning’s. Paul, you’re drunk. I’m ashamed of you. Go home and get sober. Let him go.’

Lucky I had the knife, or I verily believe he would have run a muck amongst us. As it was he gave us a parting scowl and slouched away into the gloom.

‘Beg pardon, sir !’ said Chinnery, sidling up to me, brushing his hat softly ; ‘but we did not know you were a friend of Captain Danning’s.’

‘I am a friend of Captain Danning’s,’ said I, ‘and what is more, I want to hear all about this business. Come inside and tell me.’

Nothing loth at the prospect of hearing his own big words, he followed me in at once. He was a spare man with a conical head of bristles, which he stroked alternately with his hat as he narrated his wrongs.

‘The fact is, sir,’ said he, after a few preliminary flourishes, ‘the Captain has had a gentleman’s credit, but when he came back from abroad, paid Southampton, and never gave a copper to Broxford, why, there was a revulsion. There was a loss of confidence, and loss of confidence, sir, means loss of credit and financial disaster. We all respect the Captain as an open-hearted gentleman, but sentiment is one thing and duty is another. The duty was the reverse of agreeable, but what other course was open to us when all our applications were treated with contemptuous silence ? Old Paul, too ! Well, sir, you have had a specimen of him this very evening. That’s the sample ! Either raging in his cups and insulting the community, or daundering on like an idiot about ghosts and creepers. Mr. Dent, sir, that man is a Nincubus. We might have stood it all, sir, if it wasn’t for him and his boat. Flesh and blood can’t stand that piratical craft close at our doors with old Paul in command, though. So the meeting was called and the business discussed.’

I heard him to the end, told him I would speak to Captain Dan-

ning next day, and promised that the bills should be paid within a week.

Then I had up Mr. Penney. He did not hold with the Chinnery proceedings at all, and had no love for Mr. Chinnery himself. He was a bad bred one, always shoving himself forward and bellowing. At the same time if Miss Carrie had gone about as usual, chucking a kind word or two here and there, instead of making muddle and mystery at Mill House, nothing of this sort would have happened. He was not going to be a party to it. Not he!

‘I suppose if the rest are paid it will be all right, Penney?’

‘Well, Mr. Dent, Captain Harleigh told me I might speak out to you, and speak out I will. I don’t like that boat, and I don’t like old Paul. I never was partial to boats and never shall be. With a horse ever so cranky you know where you are, but where are you with a boat? What is that *Folly* being rigged out for, except for smuggling or something worse? The old man bought her at Southampton. Bought her from Blackett. Now I know Blackett, and he told me that Paul said she was for the *Captain’s amusement*. Pack o’ nonsense! she’s for something besides that, take my word for it. I’ll tell you a queer thing though, Mr. Dent. Old Paul actually went to the bank and drew out his own earnings to pay part down for her. Blackett thinks there’s something up, and if the bill for the new stuff isn’t paid soon he’ll put a man aboard. The preventive people have their eye on her. Another queer thing, too. There’s the Captain, ill as he is, often aboard before breakfast. There’s no mistake about it. There he is, for my boys have seen him when they’ve been giving the horses a stretch on the sands. I should uncommonly like to know the rights of that boat, and look here, Mr. Dent, if you really want to get at the bottom of the mystery and muddle, you’ll have to go down to the creek and have it out with old Paul.’

CHAPTER VIII.

MYSTERY AND MUDDLE.

NEXT morning I rode down to the creek. The wicked-looking old schooner that was disturbing the village mind so much was still at her moorings. She had fresh paint on her, some new spars had been rigged up, and as I crossed the last ridge of sand I could distinctly see two men hammering and tinkering at her.

One was unmistakably old Paul, and to my astonishment, in the slim figure, short cape, and broad-brimmed sombrero of the other I recognised Uncle Pierce.

To make sure I rode on quickly, but by the time I had reached the cottage and hitched the nag on to the wicket, this second figure had disappeared, and old Paul himself was already putting off from the schooner in the punt to meet me.

I had time to look about me before he landed. The place was cut out for a smuggler; one window commanded the creek and the sea beyond, but the rest of the cottage was effectually screened from prying eyes by a high sandbank on one side and a disused martello tower on the other. So Mr. Paul could keep his eye seaward, and when his kegs were landed, store them conveniently away in the old tower, the only entrance to which was by some rickety steps to a door nine or ten feet from the ground.

There was a quaint little triangular bit of garden ground, the narrow paths marked off with round white stones from the beach, and, wonderful to behold, on either side little clumps of hardy flowers—marigolds, columbines, larkspurs, and even a scarlet geranium or two—had been sufficiently cared for to top out a blossom here and there, at the risk of being battered to death by the wind.

I was looking and wondering at this unexpected revelation of a tender trait in old Roughhead's heart when I heard his step behind me.

'Taking a look round?' he asked. He spoke civilly, but the grin that did duty for a smile did not make his face one bit more prepossessing.

'Yes, Paul,' said I, 'and admiring your garden; I can't think how you get flowers to bloom here at all.'

'For the matter of that,' he replied, pulling out his short black pipe and filling it slowly, 'flowers are like human beings: give them a fair chance, plenty of drink, don't let 'em be bothered with weeds, and they'll do their business straight and proper.'

'Why don't you keep Mill House garden like this?'

'Bah! What can you do in that stew-pot of a place?'

'What d'ye mean, Paul?'

'You would not call me a nervous man, would ye?'

'No, not exactly.'

'Nor a man given to jumps, jerks, and diversities?'

'No.'

'Right you are! But there is something about that place that goes against me. I'm glad when I'm out of it, and that's the honest truth. It agrees with the missus because she ain't a creepy one. Nothing puts her about. She'd sit down quite pleasant with Cholera Morbus, Esquire.'

'It is your wife then that opens the door?'

'The same—Beccy's a wise woman. We call her Beccy—short for Rebecca. Sometimes Baccy—both is comforting. She's wise, Master Dent, because she can hold her tongue, and the fewer words you say to the Broxford folk the better. She's not a tale-bearer. No; nor one requiring the rod or the necklace.'

'The necklace?'

'An old-fashioned instrument for female gossips, Master Dent. You might see it kept as a curiosity in Broxford vestry. Just an iron collar with a bolt that shoots neatly out into the mouth, and there it is fixed and padlocked as a punishment for having gabbed too much. There's plenty requiring it now. I never saw such a breed! Pisonous weeds, that girn, gaggle, and choke a man off his work.'

'I want to have a word or two with you about them, Paul. First of all here's your knife—put it in your pocket, and don't be quite so handy with it; and as for gabbing, don't gab quite so much about Captain Pierce in the village. It does a deal of harm.'

'All right, sir, but those curs drive me silly mad. Chinnery! He'd be none the worse for a dose of iron. It would stop his tongue and improve his poor blood.'

'He's the sort of man that can be dangerous just now.'

'Dangerous! Pah! He's not a man at all. He's a quill stump as splutters. He should be stuffed and put into a museum with a ticket on him. The like of him, too, to call meetings about the master's affairs!'

'You've got Captain Pierce on board with you this morning?'

'The master aboard? Lor' bless you, no! What put that in your head? That was my mate. Master's ill abed. Hipped and stagnant like. He's got a sort o' mildew on his nerves. A cruise or two in the *Folly* will set him up.'

'She is a queer craft for pleasure sailing, Paul; I'd like to see her.'

'Just so!' he rejoined complacently; 'young blood turns natural like to the briny and a free life. You must come aboard when she is fit.'

‘Why not now?’

‘Why not? because she is all of a muck, and that would set you against her. That would be a pity too, for the captain he fancies her, and what’s more—he *fancies you*. *So do I*.’

‘Upon my word, Paul,’ I laughed, ‘you have altered your tune pretty considerably since last night.’

‘Ah, last night I was took aback and confounder’d. Actually clean forgot you was a family friend. Old Penney’s beer swishes the wits out of ye. I remember now. *You’re hankering*—small blame to you. Look here, stick you by Miss Carrie! She’ll stick by the master, and there we are straight. Nothing can move us. Mind ye, I was with the captain afore she was born.’

‘I’m sorry he is in trouble now, Paul; I’d like to help him out of it if I could.’

He looked at me suspiciously, then relit his pipe, and, after a few puffs, said—

‘You’ve heard summat in the village. *That’s tempory*. Likewise a gnat’s bite is a tempory trouble; about the same, I take it. As to the money, this is how it stands, and you are talking to one who can tell you. The captain’s tin is invested—well—with a thousand or two here and a thousand or two there; is it likely he is going to fritte his inside about Budd’s twopenny bill for suet? No, ’taint natural. Now, Master Dent, I’ll tell you what you can do. You can settle with the Chinnery gang, if it gives you any pleasure. The captain would not mind as it’s tempory.’

‘Anything else, Paul?’

‘Well, while you’re about it—knocking about Southampton, you could pay Blackett the balance for the boat: you’ll find his place on the Quay. There’ll be something for the new spars and the rope too; it’s all tempory.’

‘Why, you said last night the boat was your own.’

‘Mum’s the word, Master Dent. There’s some things the captain’s touchy on, and this is one. A ship, you see, is unlike a church. It’s awful onlucky to use her as long as there’s a debt on her.’

‘I’ll do what I can, Paul; but keep you clear of the village.’

He gave me a parting wink, and I rode off.

I had no doubt now that Uncle Pierce was on board. He had heard Paul’s account of the row at the ‘Bugle,’ and had had just enough time to drill him into this suspicious change of front. How it was that the man was too ill to see anybody, and yet able

to take a three-mile walk before breakfast, was a puzzle; a bit of the mystery and muddle which I intended to know a little more of before the day was over, and with this view I went straight on to Mill House.

Paul's wife opened the door, and, with the single word 'garden,' stood pointing like a grim signpost till I was clear out of the house on to the lawn. There was Carrie underneath the yews, looking just about as sombre as they. She was by way of being civil though.

'Lettie has written and told me I ought to see you,' she began.

'Well, seeing that I have been here more than a fortnight, Carrie, I think it high time you did see me.'

'I explained to you about my father. He is really too ill for us to offer you any civility.'

'Not too ill to walk down to the creek, though. I saw him there this morning on board the *Folly*.'

'What took you to the creek?' she asked sharply.

'I went to see old Paul; he was gabbling about your affairs all over the village last night. Something must be done about this, Carrie.'

'Nobody pays any heed to Paul. He is not responsible at times. He has been so long with us that he thinks he is privileged to say anything. But I should like to be plain with you, Henry, at once. *The less you have to do with us the better.*'

'I'll be plain with you too, Carrie. I intend to have something to do with you, though you are a trifle ungracious. Listen now. The tradespeople are up in arms about their bills not being paid. They had a meeting about it yesterday. The money must be paid within a week.'

'It seems that Paul is not the only one who gabbles about our affairs,' she said scornfully.

'I couldn't help myself. This man Chinnery spoke to me after the row. I told him I was a friend of your father's, and it ended by my promising to see you and arranging about the payment.'

'You need not trouble yourself; they will be paid. I am expecting a remittance from abroad.'

'But it must be paid within a week, or you'll have Saville, the Southampton lawyer, down on you, and an execution in the house. Think how that will upset your father. Let me pay these people.'

'No, no.'

'Why not? I need not be seen in it at all. I can get the money from the Southampton bank and you can pay it yourself.'

'The bank again!' she cried, jumping up; 'then Mrs. Dent Fraser knows you are here.'

'She does, and what's more she wants this nonsense put an end to. Upon my word, Carrie, you'll have a deal to answer for if you refuse our friendship.'

'My father! I must think of him.'

'I want you to think about him.'

She stared at me hard for a moment or two, then turned right about and strode off to the bottom of the garden. After one or two turns she said abruptly—

'Those men must on no account come here. Yes, you must pay them and I'll repay you. They must not come here. No one must come here to upset him. My remittance is sure to come to-morrow, or next day at the furthest.'

'All right.'

'The sooner the better,' she added eagerly.

'I'll go to Southampton to-morrow.'

'Mrs. Dent Fraser must not know.'

'Very well, but I give you my word you may trust her.'

'Trust her! Trust one who has persecuted us unceasingly. You have forced me to trust you, and I am going to put your friendship to the test. You must promise me something.'

'Promised before asked.'

'I want you to leave Broxford directly this is settled.'

'Come, come! Carrie—this is really——'

'Don't shirk this like you did at Bordeaux. I am asking it for my father's sake. You don't know him. You don't know and can scarcely believe how far he is above other men. See, too, how stricken he is now. Surely this must move you? I told you about the money at Bordeaux. He has again been unfortunate, and he has flown to opium. He takes too much; you can see that. You can see he is either excited or morbidly depressed. You are a doctor, too, and must know that excitement hurts him. Your presence here excites him. So you see it is for his sake I ask this slight favour of you.'

She jerked out her words and clutched my arm passionately as she walked me back to the house. On the green she stopped, and looked at me so pleadingly and searchingly with those big black eyes, as she said, 'I ask this slight favour of you,' that like a fool I promised.

Of course I was a fool; but I believe the place had something to do with it. In that stuffy garden where the flowers drooped, choked in their own scent, and where the birds hopped unnaturally tame about you, it almost seemed as if this sombre, unattractive girl had some occult influence over me.

The moment I got into the street I knew what an idiot I had made of myself. In fact I had stopped, with half a mind to go back and tell her that on no account would I think of leaving Broxford, when a cautious 'Hsh!' caught my ear.

I looked up the street and down the street. Not a soul was about, and it was only when the word was repeated that I traced it to my erratic uncle, whose haggard face was thrust out of one of the small side windows close to me.

'Hsh!' he whispered again. 'All right! I watched you both in the garden. Women are queer. Faddy! Want coaxing and all that sort of thing. You'll manage it though—no fear! You've got dash, my boy; and dash is what I like in a young fellow!'

I was in the wrong sort of humour for a *tête-à-tête* with him or anybody else just then. I wanted to clear myself with Carrie—as soon as possible too—so with a light word I moved on.

'Hi!' he called after me. 'Something particular to say to you. She doesn't know I'm back. Saw you at the creek this morning—couldn't get off. Old Paul told me all about you, though. You'll do, Henry—you'll do! I took a fancy to you at Bordeaux.'

'Another day,' said I.

'We shan't get another chance in a hurry, my boy. Look here—what about that Early English? You must go in for that. There's a fortune in it. I'll put you up to it. All along the sea coast is your track. All that's wanted is a little capital, and I will——'

'We'll talk about it some other time,' I put in; 'some other time when you are not looking so fagged. You are not looking well.'

'I'm hipped—out of sorts—nervous as a cat. You're a doctor now. You ought to set me up. Old Joyce is no use. Just an old woman.'

'We'll talk it all over, Uncle Pierce. To-morrow perhaps. I can't stop now. You should get away for a change.'

'Ah, there you've hit it, my boy! It's a change I want. I tell you what it is; we'll go away together. Look here—the

Folly can go anywhere! Anywhere! Ah! I can show you some things in Spain that will open your eyes and set your blood moving! There's life worth living there. Freedom! Freedom! Look here, Henry. *For God's sake get me out of this hole; it is strangling me!*'

In his excitement he had wriggled his lean body half out of the window, and grasped the railing with both hands as he shouted the last words in my ear.

I pushed him gently back—promised again to see him soon, and hurried on to the 'Bugle' to write my letter to Carrie. I told her plumply I wouldn't leave Broxford, and that I had been a fool in promising. I told her too that her father was worse than she thought, and should be taken in hand at once. We could talk about him when I brought her the money.

Written it was and sent off forthwith, but for all that I was half ashamed to meet Lettie in the evening. I believe if I had not promised to meet the old doctor I should have stopped away until this Danning muddle was off my mind.

I went, but somehow the evening was out of tune. Old Joyce was a wet blanket. We couldn't speak out, and Lettie mistook my silence.

'I need not take Carrie's churlishness to heart,' said she; 'she would come round when the money matters were settled. Her father's troubles had turned her head, but she would be cordial enough by-and-by.'

Aggravating, this! Miss Lettie too was not herself. Her father was sleepy, and Mrs. Maxton instead of stitching fondled Bizzy and listened complacently to old Joyce. He had all the talking to himself, and talked of nothing but the everlasting Dannings. I was sick and tired of them.

He, too, had a grievance. Carrie had never been near him since she came back—never so much as said 'thank you' for his attention to her poor mother.

Shabbily though as Captain Pierce had behaved, he did not like to see his old friend going downhill so fast. That laudanum ought to be stopped. Perhaps I would lunch with him to-morrow and have a chat about the whole case.

The evening was a dead failure. I left early, lit my pipe, and went for a stroll down the meadows. Neither pipe nor stroll, though, got rid of the uncomfortable feeling that there was a rough time in store for me. What was the meaning of Carrie's extraordinary anxiety to get rid of me? I had spoken honestly

about her and her father, yet here she was clutching and beseeching me with morbid eagerness to get out of the village. If her father wanted to go away, why on earth didn't he go?

A heavily laden punt passed me on my way back to the village, and it was not so dark but that I recognised Paul's square shoulders at the oars. What was he doing there at that time of night?

CHAPTER IX.

DIGITALIS.

BEFORE I started for Southampton the post brought me a letter from Mrs. Dent Fraser. Why hadn't I written oftener and fuller about the Dannings? Surely I could find ten minutes to give her a gossiping letter about them, and about Cariña in particular? She had an old woman's fancy to know exactly what she was like. Was she handsome as well as clever? I was to write fully, and whatever I wrote would be held sacred. Somehow or other the quarrel must be ended; the sooner the better, and *she would like to see the new friendship cemented as strongly as possible.*

Harriett had heard about me and wanted to come to Broxford, so a letter from me would keep her quiet. If I wrote *two*, she could show her one.

Now, it would never do to have the lively Harriett at Broxford, picking up every bit of ugly gossip she could about poor Carrie and her father, so I sat down and wrote the answers before starting. Lucky I did! I should not have found it so easy later on.

I rode over to the bank, drew out the money, paid Blackett, and heard a little more from him about the *Folly* transaction. Yes, old Paul had drawn his earnings out of the bank and paid the first deposit for her. What she was wanted for, though, no one could tell. Hardly for smuggling, just under the very nose of the Preventive station. She was a strong-built boat, fit to go anywhere if you weren't in a hurry.

'The old chap is fitting her out so quickly, sir,' he said, as I took my leave, 'that if you hadn't paid me I should have sent a man across to-morrow.'

And with this scanty information I rode back to Broxford in time for Dr. Joyce's lunch.

He was one of the old school. Dispensed his own medicine,

and spoke with scornful pity about the new-fangled folly of trusting such an important branch of therapeutics to a mere druggist. Such faith did he put in his own physic, too, that Harleigh declared he had enough uncorked draughts and mixtures in Willow Bank to stock a shop.

He was a handsome man. Perhaps his capacious forehead did not cover much wisdom, but an impressive manner and a ready sympathy with his patients had won him a large practice. We talked hospital talk during lunch, and after that discussed the Dannings in the consulting room over some coffee.

‘A bad business this of your uncle’s,’ he began. ‘Very bad! The opium has got the upper hand of him, as it always does.’

‘How long has it been going on?’

Ever since his wife’s death. In fact I may say the craze came on, as far as I could see, the very day of her death. He was queer that very evening. I cautioned him about it when I called to see how he was keeping up, and got a slap in the face for my pains! I was told, sir, that he knew as much about it as I did, and I might keep my advice till it was sought. In fact, the man was abominably rude, and I have not been inside Mill House since. How could I go after that snub? But this need not have kept Miss Carrie away. I told you yesterday that she has never even crossed my door to shake hands with her old friend.’

‘All her father,’ said I; ‘he is dragging her down. I want to get him away and make him give up the laudanum drop by drop.’

‘Quite right! and don’t forget the bromide. Make Carrie a little more sociable too, Mr. Dent, while you are about it.’

‘A tough job that, Dr. Joyce.’

‘I dare say, but I wonder the girl has never popped in just to ask about her mother’s last days. It was an interesting case.’

‘Heart disease?’

‘No. No disease. Blundell of Southampton, referee to the Prudential, said there was, but I say no. The two sounds were quite distinct, there was a slight anæmic bruit, and that’s all. But I’ll tell you what there was; there was occasional tumultuous action with consequent congestion of the other organs. That is what there was, and digitalis acted like a charm. That is a drug I handle freely, Mr. Dent. I’ve given as much as half-ounce doses of the tincture to Budd in his attacks of D. T. Stiffish dose, eh?’

‘What did she die of, then?’ I asked.

‘Syncope. She was subject to prolonged fainting fits, and to my surprise went off in one of them. I must give your poor uncle

his due, though. He was a capital nurse. Never left her side. Measured out her medicine and was a real help to me.'

'You don't mean to say that you trusted him to measure out digitalis?' I asked, with a sudden pang of uneasiness.

'Why not? He knows a deal about medicines, I can tell you. Studied somewhere, I believe. At all events he knew all about the new preparation Digitaline, and, as I said before, it acted like a charm.'

'But surely you did not let him have the bottle in his own keeping?'

'The bottle was his own. He knows as much as you or I.'

'But a man who drinks!'

'Oh, all that came on after. Poor fellow! he was tremendously cut up at her death. It is extraordinary how some people jump to conclusions about these heart cases! You cannot be too careful in your diagnosis. There was Blundell, only saw the case once, and swore it was valvular. You're a young man, Mr. Dent, and it may not be amiss to run over the points that have invariably guided me.' And with this he settled himself in the depths of his consulting chair, crossed his legs, and forthwith launched into a cut-and-dried lecture on heart disease.

Not a single word did I hear. Horrible misgivings and suspicions took sudden hold of me. He sat there complacently tapping the tips of his fingers while he drawled out something that sounded like a page from Dr. Watson's 'Practice of Medicine,' but I heard nothing. The case grew blacker and blacker as he talked. The very gallipots and bottles that shone through the open surgery door behind his nodding head seemed to be singing out 'Poison! Poison!' and at last, so horribly overpowering was my conviction of foul play, that to the old gentleman's consternation I jumped up in the middle of his peroration, barely said good-bye, and fairly bolted out of the house for fear of giving him an inkling of my suspicions.

Straightway into the open country I walked, anywhere to get quit of the new horror. It stuck to me like grim death, though, every step I took seeming to build a clearer and more substantial case against Uncle Pierce! It was as plain as a pikestaff! Carrie was away, he was in great straits about money—his wife's life was insured, the 'elegant preparation' was at his hand, and in an evil moment he had yielded to temptation. No wonder he had flown to the laudanum and sent for Carrie! No wonder she was at her wit's end how to protect him, and had shut up Mill House from

the prying world. No wonder she wanted to get rid of me, and that the miserable man should cry out, '*For God's sake get me out of this hole. It is strangling me!*'

I hated myself for summing up the case against him. It was disloyal, unworthy, what you like, but for the life of me I could not help it. It blurred everything. It put a cloud between me and Lettie, and dulled even the broad sunshine that sat on the hills across the valley.

Without a thought of where I was going I had unwittingly taken the upper road to the shore. In fact I had reached the very end of the lane overlooking the creek before I thought about where I was.

There I was, though, and there rode the *Folly* at her moorings with a patch or two more paint on her. She was almost ready for sea. Ah! one could understand her presence there now well enough, and old Paul's anxiety to get the debt cleared off.

The smoke from his chimney curled lazily up from behind the martello tower, and lost itself against the blue waters of the Solent. It looked inviting, but as I did not want to have anything to say to Mr. Paul just then I turned back by a less frequented lane.

As fate would have it, this brought me face to face with him. He was digging and grubbing among the wild flowers on the bank, mumbled out something about rabbits, and chucked the roots over the hedge with an oath directly I appeared. He was by way of being cordial, though, notwithstanding the angry flush at being caught in his pet weakness.

He had just come from Mill House and had had a chat with the master about me. I was all right. I was managing things tip-top, but he hoped I hadn't forgotten the boat. The Captain was looking forward to his cruise, but he was high—very high to-day. 'You've set him on his perch and no mistake. Why he's chirruping. Lortells, Master Dent! how I was mistook in you! Why, your coming here has been a godsend!'

A godsend! But for Lettie, I heartily wished I had never set foot in the place.

'The master is a bit of a doctor,' he went on, 'but no doctor can cure himself, because he can't see inside himself. But you and me is at one way of thinking about his getting out of this hole. I take it, Master Dent, there is nothing but what a change will put all right.'

'I'm not so sure about that,' I said quickly; 'of course he would be all the better for giving up brandy and laudanum.'

'Ah! we are at one about that too! many and many's the time I've told him to try rum. Brandy dries up your juices. Rum opens your pores and lets new life into ye. Look at me. I'm a Rum man. There's no jerk about me.'

'There are things worse than drink, Paul.'

'Naturally. Nothing worse than bad drink, though. I put my face against those foreign fal-lals. Just poisons!'

'Every straight man should put his face against them. They're dangerous commodities and have got many a man into trouble.'

'I'll be bound they have, and will again. A man might act on the square, fool or no fool. The Captain would be better if he dropped that opium and stuck to rum. He's a merry soul! Wait till you see him in Spain. He chirps there!'

'You are not likely to see *me* there, Paul.'

'Yah! tell that to the marines. Paul has eyes, and Paul has ears. No fear! You'll stick to the ship and you'll get your reward. Lortells, Master Dent!' he went on, dashing the spade into the soft earth before him, 'you'll open your young eyes there. We ain't cooped up with a hedge on either side of us there. We haven't got a blue-breeched preventive man spying down the kitchen window to see what you've got for dinner there! No! no! Free life there. The Captain's place is just outside the forest. Such a forest as you never clapped eyes on. Oaks and chestnuts! Miles and miles of 'em. Big round as yonder tower. Bigger. You can spank out where you please. Take your gun, too, and knock over anything that comes in the way, with never a soul to say nay. Not all play with the Captain, though. "Paris to-morrow, Paul," he'll sing out to me all of a sudden, and off we go. Then off to Switzerland, and from Switzerland maybe to Bordeaux, then back across the mountains with the mules. A rare time of it, Master Dent, and the Captain is warming to it already!'

All this he rattled out without a break, but it came with a nasty jar to me.

'I should fancy Captain Pierce won't find the old life quite so merry for him out there now his wife is gone.'

A chance shot this, and for a moment or two I could not tell whether it had told. I looked at him steadily, but not a muscle of the old villain's face quivered. Then gradually a twinkle came to his eyes, and a smile—a smile horrible to see—gathered about the corners of his mouth. I could have sworn he winked when he replied gaily—

'*We don't take much account of women out there, Master Dent.*'

The answer and the man's manner were so revolting that I turned on my heel in disgust.

'You seem out of sorts, Master Dent,' he sang out cheerily as I made off.

'Perhaps I am, Paul. Perhaps there is enough to make me.'

'To my way of thinking, the best plan when things worrit you is to let 'em slide.'

'That's not my way of thinking. Good morning.'

'Ah, you are not the first good man that has been knocked silly!' he shouted after me. 'Lortells, Master Dent! There was a gal at Barcelona——'

But I was too far off to hear about the Barcelona lady. I looked round as I turned the corner, though, and saw his burly figure leaning on the spade with a broad grin on his face.

His words made the Mill House muddle murkier than ever—a thousand times worse for me, too, for now it thrust itself between me and Lettie like another white mist. How could I speak of the great love that was consuming me? How could I sully her pure ears with my vows when my mind was full of these lurid suspicions about my own kith and kin? One thing was certain. The sooner these suspicions were got rid of the better. So I resolved to go straight on to Mill House. Perhaps a hint of what I knew would strike a little responsive cordiality from Miss Carrie. At the inn, however, I found a note that stopped me.

'She would not trouble me to call about the money,' she wrote. 'She had heard from abroad and would be able to make a different arrangement about paying the people. She was glad it was so, for I had given her pretty good proof of how little I could be trusted. After breaking my solemn promise to go, she was now sure I had been sent there by Mrs. Dent Fraser to watch and harry them. The only proof I could give of my good will was to leave Broxford at once.'

Poor Carrie! I could read between the lines now, and pitied her with my whole heart. I told her in my answer I had the money and she had better take it, but I was sure she had a deeper trouble than money—a trouble that made her need a friend more than ever she did in her life, and there I was and should be whenever she liked to call me. '*For your father's sake,*' I added, 'don't harden your heart against me. Let me come and see what can be done for him.'

Two or three days passed and never a word came in reply. A wretched time it was, for now that this shadow had grown into

something substantial between me and Lettie, I knew how entirely my life was bound up in hers. Paul avoided the village, but was seen punting up to Mill House every evening. His wife stalked about the streets paying odd sums of money to the tradesfolk. Uncle Pierce slouched down to the creek every morning. The *Folly* was ready for sea, but Carrie stuck to the house. There was a large tennis gathering at Posbrooke. Lettie tried her best to persuade her to show herself; but no—she would not budge.

A lover's eyes and ears are preternaturally keen, and I fancied a little change came over Lettie herself during that miserable time. She spoke less about Carrie, was oftener up at the school she had started by Penney's Hill Farm, and was not in her old spirits. Her friend Carrie came in for a round of abuse at the tennis party, and she took this to heart.

'Now, Lettie,' said I to her, when we got back, 'the fact is there is something worse than money trouble at Mill House. I'm afraid there's some disgrace at the bottom of it.'

'All the more reason we should be up and doing something for them,' she replied. 'Poor Carrie! and you are doing nothing!'

'Don't say that. I told her I would stand by her. I begged her for her father's sake to let me help them, but she won't. She won't even answer my letter.'

'Well, it shall not go on any longer. I'll go and see her at once.'

'You'll do no good. She hates me.'

'Ah! but she doesn't know. I ought to have told her before. I've been wrong. I'll tell her you came on purpose to help her.'

'You mustn't say that. I came to see you, Lettie. You must not go till I have told you the whole story.'

'I'll go to her first. I want to get it over.'

'No! you must hear me first. I——'

But she was gone before I could say another word. Mrs. Maxton heard it all. 'Just like her!' she said, taking up her work; 'dashes at everything! She frightens me. That is how she started those schools on the hill. If there is anything wrong, no matter what it is, she must try to put it right.'

'She is not looking well.'

'Nor are you. Nobody is well. Everybody seems to have a touch of Mill House about them. She ought not to have gone there.'

'I tried to stop her.'

'Tried to stop her! You know very well she went for your sake.'

She sees you are unhappy about Carrie, and wants to put it right.'

'Unhappy! Well, I don't like to think there is a worse trial in store for her. That's all.'

'Not quite all, Henry.'

'What more can there be?'

'You love her?'

'Love her! Love Carrie!' I cried. 'Good heavens! she is about the very last woman in the world I could love. Love Carrie! She repels me. What on earth put this awful rubbish in your head, Mrs. Maxton? Surely, surely, you must know—'

'Know what?' she stiched.

'That I love Lettie with my whole heart!' I burst out. 'That I have loved her ever since we met at Drufflie. That she has never once been out of my mind. You must—you *must* have known it!'

'I certainly thought so at one time, Henry, but Carrie—'

'Carrie! Don't speak of her! She hates me. Upon my word she is hardly human. She—'

But here Harleigh bustled in. 'Where was Lettie? What made her run off to Lady Grumpy's just before dinner? After the Posbrooke gossip he had half a mind to drop Mill House and the mystifications altogether, but he supposed he might as well speak to a stone as to Lettie.'

She came back late for dinner. She looked pale and fagged.

'Carrie will see you in the evening,' she said, 'and I think you will find her more cordial.'

(To be continued.)

At the Sign of the Ship.

‘**W**HY don’t you write here about what people are doing?’ somebody says to me. The answer is not very far to seek. What are people doing? In Mr. Whiteing’s new—what shall I call it, didactic romance?¹—the hero, on ‘The Island,’ gets a set of newspapers. And he reads, ‘Brigandage in the Public Thoroughfares,’ ‘Foreign Paupers Blocking the Public Streets,’ ‘Afghanistan: Five Hundred Killed,’ ‘Moonlighting in Ireland: a Policeman’s Head Beaten to Pulp,’ ‘Evictions: Death of an Old Woman on the Roadside,’ and so on. Then from America comes, ‘Green Immigrants Sold like Cattle,’ ‘Awful Railway Accident; the Line stripped Bare by Speculators, and no Money to pay for Repairs’: all this in the ‘cool devilry of mocking head-lines, as though all the woe and all the folly of the world were but one stupendous joke.’

* * *

These are the things people are doing, or these make a large proportion of the world’s performances. I know there are plenty of good actions, but these rather shun the light. You seldom find them in the newspapers, except when a nurserymaid is burned in saving her employer’s children, or a railway guard gives his life (not being a ‘speculator’) for the safety of his train, or a rich man gives away half his income—a fact which he does not invite the world to comment upon. It is because we all sit in the Ear of Dionysius, in the whispering gallery of the world, and hear the reverberations of every mad word and deed, of every sorrow and disgrace,—it is because we are always listening to these things that I do not care to write about them here.

¹ *The Island; an Adventure of a Person of Quality.* A Novel. By Richard Whiteing. Cr. 8vo. 6s. London: Longmans & Co.

And yet there are people who are doing things which are worth the doing, and worth telling of. There are still some who can bend the bow of Ulysses. Sir Edmund Currie and those who worked with him did a thing likely to reduce the stock of horrors in the daily press when they set themselves to realise a romancer's dream by founding the People's Palace in East London. Most of the readers of this Magazine have read *All Sorts and Conditions of Men*—if they have not, it is time they did—and will be glad to hear of the excellent progress which is being made.—Ed.

* * *

For those who care to know of the attempt that is being made to drive out the demon of Dulness from one portion of this thickly-peopled city, the best thing to do is to take a tram car from Aldgate station and travel down some two miles of the Mile End Road till they come to the Palace. If they arrive about one o'clock on a Sunday, they will see some hundreds of working men and women sitting in the stately Queen's Hall, listening to the organ recital. Or if their visit is in the evening, they will see the workman, his day's work over, reading in the library. At present the library is in the Queen's Hall, but in the spring the new library which is being built to hold 250,000 volumes will be opened. There too they will find a gymnasium and billiard tables for recreation, and science classes and a technical day school in full swing. A swimming bath will soon follow, and if the visitor is pleased with what he sees it is easy for him to give a helping hand to the work by writing as big a cheque as he can manage and handing it over to Sir Edmund Currie for the building fund.—Ed.

* * *

There are many to whom a visit to the East End is impracticable, but if any of these should care to know what is going forward at the Palace they can do so by taking in the *Palace Journal*, an advertisement of which, with form of subscription, will be found at the end of this Magazine. This is a really notable little paper which has sprung into a vigorous existence under the editorship of Mr. Besant. It is said that one half of the world knows not how the other half lives. In this journal the West End can learn how at any rate part of the East End lives. Neither quarter of the town will be the worse off should

the journal form a link and a means of communication between them.—Ed.

* * *

The following rondel was given, twelve years ago, to a friend of mine, by another friend of mine. He is so far away, and it is such a very little poem, that I venture to print it without telegraphing to the Adirondacks for permission. Probably the author's hand will be easily recognised, and I presume that, twelve years ago, the sage who laments his youth was just twenty-five. And as to his hair being 'grey,' it is not even 'brindled.'

OF HIS PITIABLE TRANSFORMATION.

I who was young so long,
Young and alert and gay,
Now that my hair is grey
Begin to change my song.

Now I know right from wrong,
Now I know *pay* and *pray*,
I who was young so long,
Young and alert and gay.

Now I follow the throng,
Walk in the beaten way,
Hear what the elders say,
And own that I was wrong—
I who was young so long.

* * *

The word has gone forth that ballades, rondels, and virelains are exploded; old toys, dolls that the sawdust hath run out of, jacks in the box with the spring broken, drums with holes in the parchment, penny trumpets that have lost the mouthpiece, penny pistols that flash in the pan. So be it; but these amenities only apply to *English* ballades and so forth. In French a man may still use the measures of Marot and Banville. There can, therefore, be no harm in publishing Mr. Henley's

BALLADE A UN SIEN AMI.

Expédier à ton adresse,
 L——, une gaillarde chanson,
 C'est déjà de la maladresse ;
 Aussi j'en demande pardon.
 C'est vrai, tu n'aimes de Meudon
 Ni les pintes ni les salades ;
 Mais tu as ceci de très-bon :
 Tu sais, toi, troussez les ballades.

C'est une fille enchanteresse,
 Ta Muse à toi, savant luron,
 Riche de grâce et de finesse,
 Pleine de charme et d'abandon.
 Le verbe leste et l'œil fripon,
 Qu'elle fait de bonnes cascades !
 Ah ! zut, poète à l'art barbon :
 Tu sais, toi, troussez les ballades.

Te voilà, pilier de la presse,
 Des vrais princes du feuilleton,
 Tu dis à Molière la messe,
 Tu lis le grec (ce me dit-on) ;
 Pourtant, tirer le gros canon
 Ça ne sied qu'aux esprits maussades :
 A d'autres, donc, le bombardon !
 Tu sais, toi, troussez les ballades.

Ami, l'amour et le renom,
 Si tu m'en crois, sont choses fades.
 A toi le bonheur ! nom de nom,
 Tu sais, toi, troussez les ballades.

* * *

M. Michel Bréal has lately published a little pamphlet on etymologies, which explains the fascination of this study. Etymo-

logies are so freakish. There was once a youth named Anson, whom his friends called 'The Count.' The etymology ran thus: Anson, Hands on! Hands off! Paws off! Pausoffski—the Count. Nothing could be clearer or less expected. M. Bréal gives a French example. You speak of a *personne accablée de chagrin*. As for *personne* (*persona*), it has a vast long history since it meant a mask. See for this Mr. Max Müller's new *Biographies of Words*. *Accablé* is derived from a Byzantine siege engine of some sort. *Chagrin* is the Turkish *sagri*, meaning 'skin,' so that *peau de chagrin* is a tautology, more or less. Abstract roots all seem to come from something very concrete in the long run, which is just what one would expect. *Splendeo*, I shine, means I am yellow, from *splen*, and is an allusion to the jaundice. Thus we may say that people look on splendid achievements with jaundiced eyes, and so get very 'mixed' indeed, etymologically. Why the ancients thought muscles (*musculi*) like little mice, who can imagine? (Theocritus, Idyll. xxii. 48.) We no longer see the analogy, but we keep the word. Who would not connect *habiller* with *habitus*? M. Gaston Paris says it is a corruption of *abiller*, and originally meant to arrange faggots of wood in *billes*. Such are the diversions of the philologist. The following verses on him are by Miss May Kendall.

FAIRIES AND THE PHILOLOGIST.

About his pillow he was ware,
 'T the watches o' the night,
 Of shining elves and ladies fair,
 And knights in armour bright.

And drowsily he thought, 'I know
 Exactly what you are—
 You're parables of Sun and Snow,
 And Moon and Sky and Star.'

But presently a doubtful awe
 Disturbed his idle scorn;
 For each familiar face he saw
 Was sorrowful and worn.

AT THE SIGN OF THE SHIP.

Ladies and wizards, knights and elves,
 They moaned: 'Bad luck to *you*,
 We only know we're not ourselves,
 We cannot tell who's who.'

The enchanted Prince, at Beauty's side,
 Seemed solacing her ire.
 'Too bad,' dejectedly he cried:
 'One of you calls her Fire;

'And there's another calls her Snow;
 She says, till she is told
 Her meaning, how is she to know
 If she is hot or cold?'

With weary steps they wandered by:
 'We were quite wrong,' they said.
 'You're not a prince—not Beauty I;
 We might as well be dead!'

Slowly dispersed the vanquished throng,
 Faded the raiment bright;
 It was as though a mournful song
 Came floating through the night.

'We're dead and gone. Our stories grew
 From how our names were spelt.
 If some one made a Myth of *You*,
 You'd find out how it felt.

'Tis all in vain. We're Dawn or Day,
 We're Sun or Sea or Air.
 Only—you might have let us stay
 Till you knew *what* we were.'

M. K.

* *

Can there be a prettier illustration of superstition, and of how the civilised man falls back under the spell of it, than the anecdote which follows? It is from an Orkney correspondent, who got into conversation with a shoemaker, an old Hudson's Bay man.

Stories were told about the Indians near Fort Garry, and we shall hear how the magic of a fair squaw won and kept the heart of a Scot. 'He assured me that they could make any man "fairly crazy" by "putting medicine on him," and to do this all they required was a hair of his head. On one occasion he, with two Hebrideans, was living in the hut of a half-breed who had a very beautiful daughter. One of his companions, John Macleod, fell violently in love with this girl. During the day he was easily argued out of his passion, but no sooner did he lay his head on his pillow than he became "fair mad for her." He could not sleep at night, and went through all the orthodox phases of the "tender passion." On the day when the Scotchmen were leaving the place Macleod had gone out first, and my informant was "putting his bed right" when he found under the pillow a small parcel. So soon as the girl saw it she jumped up and demanded that it should be given to her, but my friend refused, and going outside he opened it. It contained "tw a bits o' bark wi' a heart pented reid inside each, an' atween them a lump of oakum, and inside the oakum twa locks of hair, wan fair like Macleod's, and wan black like hers, and they were livin'! They were *alive*, sir!" I asked him what he meant by "alive," and he said, "Ye ken if ye pit a hair frae the tail o' a staig (*Anglicè*, stallion) in rinnin' water hid'll turn into a eel: weel hid was just like that." He then went on to say that though he had often seen horsehair put "in the burn oot-by" turn into eels, in Canada this never happened. I asked whether Macleod forgot the girl when he left, but "Na, na, she had pit medicine on him, ye ken, an' a wee while after he gaed back and married her."

* * *

It never rains but it pours. Mr. Bourdillon published his translation and edition of the oldest French novel, 'Aucassin et Nicolette,' in autumn. Another appeared in January, and now Mr. E. J. W. Gibb sends me his own privately printed version. There are but fifty copies, ye bibliophiles, and it is a very agreeable translation, with the old French to follow. Mr. Gibb has ventured on what neither Mr. Bourdillon nor the other translator dared to attempt—he has given the verses in assonance, not in rhyme. The verses of the original are assonant, but Mr. Gibb's experiment is new in English, except, of course, in old ballads. I rather like the effect, but it is unfamiliar, and perhaps unsatisfactory to most English ears. It is odd that each of the three translators

spells Nicolette in his private way: 1. Nicolette. 2. Nicolete. 3. Nicholette. The next must call the lady Nicholette, if he would be original.

A. LANG.

The 'Donna.'

THE EDITOR begs to acknowledge the receipt of the following contributions. Amounts received after March 10 will be acknowledged in the May number:—

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In November last 13,899 men were served at the 'Donna'; in December, 9,799; and in January 13,930.

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*The Editor of LONGMAN'S MAGAZINE,
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